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Printed for the use of the Foreign Office. July 1895.

CONFIDENTIAL.

(6654.)

F.O.
424

181

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 6583.]

January to March 1895.

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Printed for the use of the Foreign Office. July 1895.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 6583.]

No. 1.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 1.)

(No. 1.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 1, 1895, 7 P.M.

I HAVE received a telegram from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, stating that the Vali has refused his application for a permit in favour of Mr. Markham, "Times" correspondent, to visit the Vilayets of Bitlis and Van.

The Foreign Minister, to whom I sent a Dragoman to inquire grounds of this refusal, has promised to confer with the Grand Vizier on the subject, as the matter concerns his Highness' Department.

No. 2.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 2.)

(No. 3.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 2, 1895, 12·20 P.M.

THE Sultan has confirmed the election of the Armenian Patriarch which was reported in my telegram to your Lordship No. 260 of the 20th December last.

No. 2*.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 2.)

(No. 4.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 2, 1895, 4·10 P.M.

MR. BLOCK has just been sent for by the Foreign Minister, and informed by his Excellency that Mr. Gladstone's speech has greatly upset the Sultan, who has received a full telegraphic report, though the speech itself has not been published here. His Imperial Majesty complains bitterly that the acts of his Government are blamed before the result of the inquiry is known; that he himself is personally attacked.

Said Pasha begged earnestly that Her Majesty's Government should say something to soothe the Sultan's feelings, as otherwise his Excellency fears that some injudicious action may be taken by His Majesty.

No. 3.

Sir E. Monson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 3.)

(No. 3. Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Vienna, January* 3, 1895.

ACCORDING to the Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople, extreme apprehension is expressed by his Russian colleague, who fears that the facts which will be brought to light in Armenia will far exceed all anticipation, and will be accompanied with serious results.

No. 4.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 4.)

(No. 5.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 4, 1895, 12·5 P.M.

I HAVE the honour to state, with reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 149, that I yesterday formally reserved at the Porte our right to send a Consul in place of Delegate in case the inquiry does not proceed satisfactorily.

I had previously obtained the assent of the Russian and French Ambassadors.

No. 5.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 2.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January* 4, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 594 of the 25th ultimo, giving the names of certain Turkish officers who are said to have a knowledge of the facts connected with the alleged massacres in the Sassoon district.

I think the British Delegate with the Bitlis Commission should suggest that the evidence of the officers mentioned by Mr. Graves, and especially that of Edhem Pasha, should be taken by the Commissioners.

No. 6.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 4, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 600 of the 26th ultimo relative to further outrages by Kurds, reported by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, and the feeling against Christians displayed by the Government officials in his district.

I approve the intention expressed by your Excellency of bringing to the notice of the Porte the horrible circumstances attending the reported murder by Kurds of an Armenian named Manoug.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 7.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 12.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 4, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram No. 1 of the 1st instant, stating that the Vali of Aleppo had refused to comply with the application of Her Majesty's Consul at that place for a permit for Mr. Markham, a correspondent of the "Times," to visit Bitlis and Van, and that you had sent a Dragoman to the Foreign Minister to inquire what were the grounds of the refusal.

I approve the action taken by your Excellency in the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 8.

Sir H. Drummond Wolff to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 7.)

(No. 4.)
My Lord, *Madrid, January* 4, 1895.

A DAY or two ago the Turkish Minister called on me and requested me to read two Circulars issued by the Ottoman Government respecting Armenia.

As they are no doubt known to Her Majesty's Government, I should not have troubled your Lordship on the subject but for a paragraph communicated to the newspaper by the Fabra Agency. It runs thus:—

"The Imperial Legation of Turkey in Madrid informs us that it possesses the photographic *fac simile* of a letter, which bears the editorial stamp ('el sello de redacción') of the periodical 'Trochak,' [*sic*] the organ of the Armenian Revolutionary Alliance, published in London, a letter of which the Ottoman Government has obtained possession, and which has caused the most lively sensation in all the political circles of Constantinople.

"This letter, according to our information, contains an introduction recommending ('que sean atendidas,') the bearers, who are supposed to be interested in the revolutionary plans of Armenia."

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. DRUMMOND WOLFF.

No. 9.

Home Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received January* 7.)

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Whitehall, January* 5, 1895.

WITH reference to your letter of the 17th ultimo transmitting a copy of a Memorandum from the Turkish Ambassador respecting one Nazarbekiantz, who is said to be an Armenian agitator resident in England, I am directed by the Secretary of State to forward to you herewith, to be laid before Lord Kimberley, the inclosed copy of a police report upon the subject of the above-named Nazarbekiantz and his proceedings.

I am, &c.
(For Under-Secretary),
(Signed) CHARLES S. MURDOCH.

Inclosure in No. 9.

Police Report.

REFERRING to Home Office Correspondence, I beg to report that about the end of October last Nazarbekiantz, with his wife and family, arrived in London, accompanied by M. Beniard, one of the leaders of the "Huntchagist Revolutionary Party," and went to live with the notorious Russian Nihilist named "H. Sarabriakoff," at 10, The Parade, Acton, having at the same time rented the ground floor of 23, The Parade, which was subsequently used as a printing office.

About the same time a large quantity of baggage arrived at the Royal Albert Docks, from Marseilles, for Nazarbekiantz, and amongst it was six cases of type for printing some foreign language, twelve cases of Anarchist and Nihilist literature printed in French, Russian, Hebrew, and English, all of a revolutionary nature, several thousands of letters from all parts of the world, all touching on revolution, some of them written in very violent language.

About the end of November a man named Nishan Garabedian, another leader of the "Huntchagist Revolutionary Party" arrived from Worcester, Massachusetts, United States of America, and went to live with Beniard and Nazarbekiantz, at the above address.

On the 17th December Nazarbekiantz, with his wife and family, accompanied by Beniard and Garabedian, left the Parade, and went to live at 22, Ormiston Road, Uxbridge Road, where they now live and have commenced printing there.

For several days past observation has been kept on these premises and the following notorious Nihilists and Anarchists continually visit there: W. Tchaykofsky, Plecharnoff, Stepanoff, Tcherkasosoff, M. Félix Volkhovsky, Vera Beldenski, and the Armenians Kurkdjian and the brothers Selians, and others.

(Signed) E. FLOOD, *Sergeant.*

For a considerable time past Tcherkasosoff has been endeavouring to publish Malatesta's Anarchist writings in the Armenian language, but has not been able to succeed owing to the difficulty of procuring Armenian type; this will now be easily managed, as Nazarbekiantz is printing an Armenian newspaper called the "Hentschak."

The Nihilists above mentioned are well known in "Special" as prominent men, one of them—Plecharnoff—was recently expelled from France.

From a private informant I learn that Nazarbekiantz' house is now a general rendezvous for Nihilists, and that it is the intention of the "Huntchagist" party to start a revolution in Armenia early next spring, and failing that, in the summer.

(Signed) W. MELVILLE. *Chief Inspector.*

December 31, 1894.

No. 10.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 8, 1895.)

(No. 608.)

Pera, December 28, 1894.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to state that, in accordance with the authority given in your Lordship's telegram No. 138 of the 17th instant, I have withdrawn the official communication to the Sublime Porte of Mr. Hallward's despatch No. 3 of the 6th November relating to the events in the Sassoon district.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 11.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 8.)

(No. 1.)

Constantinople, January 1, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum regarding the movements of the Turkish Commission of Inquiry.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 11.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Erzeroum, December 18, 1894.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the members of the Turkish Commission of Inquiry, who arrived here on the evening of the 13th instant, left for Moush on the morning of the 16th instant.

The morning after their arrival I sent my Dragoman to take the usual compliments to the Commissioners. He brought back a polite message from Abdullah Pasha, the First Commissioner, that they regretted that they would not have the opportunity of making my acquaintance at present, as they were to leave the next day, but they hoped to see me on their return.

It is believed that their hasty departure from Erzeroum was in consequence of telegraphic instructions from Constantinople which they received here, and that they had originally intended to remain at least a week at Erzeroum. However, they were unable to leave the next day, owing to the difficulty of procuring the 500 Turkish

liras required for their travelling expenses; the money was ultimately borrowed by the local authorities in time for them to start on the morning of the 16th instant.

A rumour is current here that Tahsin Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, has been dismissed from his post. I venture to express the opinion that, if he is not dismissed, his suspension at least, pending the inquiry which has been ordered, would be almost indispensable to a satisfactory and impartial investigation. I have already expressed my views on this subject in the last paragraph of my despatch to your Excellency of the 15th ultimo.

I had the honour to communicate the substance of the above to your Excellency in my telegrams (two) of the 16th and 17th instant.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 12.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 8.)

(No. 2.)

Constantinople, January 1, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the disturbances at Sassoon, and inclosing copy of a despatch from Mr. Hallward, giving a Turkish official account of the massacre.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 12.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Erzeroum, December 18, 1894.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch which has reached me from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, under flying seal to your Excellency. Annexed to this despatch Mr. Hallward submits a detailed commentary upon what purports to be a Turkish official account of the recent events in Sassoon, which was published in the "Daily News" of the 17th ultimo.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 12.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Sir P. Currie.

Van, December 10, 1894.

Sir,

THE Turkish official account of the late events in Sassoon, which I see published in the "Daily News" of the 17th ultimo, is such an extraordinary tissue of misstatements that I venture to submit to your Excellency a detailed commentary on it (inclosed herewith), taking the several statements *seriatim*.

It is to be hoped that the Commission which is to make an inquiry at Bitlis will arrive nearer the truth of the facts than the authorities at Constantinople appear hitherto to have done, and also that it will be productive of some more beneficial result to the people than such Commissions usually produce in this country. The Christians complain that the various Commissions and Inspectors who have visited Kurdistan have generally left things worse than they found them, for the local officials and the Kurds seeing that no practical change in the administration is effected by such visitors, are merely emboldened in their misdeeds, and existing abuses are confirmed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Inclosure 3 in No. 12.

Detailed Commentary on the late events in Sassoon.

1. ARMENIAN brigands provided with arms of foreign origin joined an insurgent Kurd tribe for the purpose of committing excesses.

The Armenians of Sassoon were not brigands. Their arms would naturally be of foreign origin as they could not obtain them in the country. They did not join any insurgent Kurdish tribe, nor did they commit excesses.

2. They burned and devastated several Mussulman villages.

They neither burned nor devastated any villages, Mussulman or other.

3. It is reported that they burned alive a Mussulman Notable.

The report is false.

4. Regular troops were sent to protect the peaceable inhabitants.

If so they mistook their instructions as they plundered and killed the inhabitants.

5. The troops not only protected and respected the submissive portion of the population, as well as the women and children, but re-established order and tranquillity to the general satisfaction.

The troops not only killed the submissive portion of the population, as well as women and children, amid circumstances of great cruelty, but created universal discontent in Moush by bringing the cholera, of which some 300 of the inhabitants died, and by destroying the villages of Shinik, Semal, and Ghelli Guzan from which the town of Moush drew largely for supplies. Order and tranquillity were re-established on the principle *Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*.

6. It is not true that the Kurds seized the furniture, effects, and cattle of the fugitive Armenians.

It is true that this was done. Some of the effects were sold in Moush, but most of the cattle was driven off by Kurds.

7. The Armenians took their property into the mountains before breaking out into revolt, and confided it to the care of their Kurdish acolytes.

It is possible that the Armenians, finding themselves attacked by tribal Kurds in force, may have confided some of their property to their Kurdish neighbours in Sassoon, but this point is immaterial, as it was not the latter who did most of the plundering, but the tribal Kurds who came from other districts.

8. The Armenian women at present with the Kurds belong to the families of the brigands, and went of their own accord with their husbands to the insurgent Kurds.

Some of the Armenian men and women took refuge with the Sassoon Kurds and thus saved themselves from being massacred by the soldiers.

9. As regards the Armenian villages which are said to have been destroyed, it was the Armenians who carried off all their belongings from their own villages before giving themselves up to brigandage.

The Armenians did not give themselves up to brigandage, and had neither time nor opportunity to carry off their property from their villages before they were attacked by Kurds and soldiers; most of their household goods were plundered or burnt with their houses by the latter.

No. 13.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January 8.*)

(No. 3.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January 1, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, inclosing copy of a despatch from Mr. Hallward in regard to the unsatisfactory condition of the border districts of the Sandjak of Hekkiari.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 13.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, December 18, 1894.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, inclosing a Report upon the present unsatisfactory condition of the border districts of the Sandjak of Hekkiari by an experienced and independent observer.

Mr. Hallward considers that this Report confirms his opinion that it is the deliberate policy of the Government to crush and stamp out the Christian population of the frontier districts, as expressed in his despatch of the 10th September, which I had the honour to transmit to your Excellency in my despatch, Confidential, of the 18th September, 1894.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 13.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, December 11, 1894.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to you herewith an account of the state of the Christian population of Guever (or Gawar) and Shemdinan (or Shemisdeen), the border districts of the Province of Hekkiari.

Having been drawn up rather more than two months ago by an independent observer, who has upwards of thirty years' experience of the country and people, this account is, I venture to think, of exceptional interest and value, as giving a trustworthy idea of the condition of a remote and little known region.

The depopulation of the Christian villages was reported by Mr. Barnham in his despatch of the 7th December, 1886, and is evidently still continuing under the united pressure of oppressive taxation and Kurdish robbery.

The inclosed Report tends to justify the opinion I expressed in my despatch of the 10th September last that the present policy of the Government is to stamp out the Christian element as far as possible on their Eastern frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

Inclosure 3 in No. 13.

Memorandum.

THE process of stamping out the Christians has been going on before our eyes in the last thirty years, especially in the districts of Zaboor and Shemisdeen. In the former, two large villages were very open to Mission effort. Good schools were taught, and the whole people were being enlightened; but the "shadow of the Kurd" was over them. The two preachers were driven out by the Kurdish bandits. One was nearly killed, and now both these villages are deserted by the Christians except a family or two in each, who cling to the Church, and are barely tolerated, in deep poverty. In Shemisdeen affairs are nearly as bad. There were eighteen villages in a fairly prosperous condition thirty years ago. At that time Sheikh Obeidullah, who later became famous in his raid upon Persia, arose in fierce hatred of the Christians. He openly proclaimed that the Son of Mary should rule no longer. One of the largest and most ancient churches was named St. Simon, the son of the tanner who was a distinguished martyr in the fourth century. This church was attacked by the Kurds and demolished; not a stone left to show its site. Since then the Christian population has been plundered of their flocks and grain, and every family mourns its young man killed by violence. Fear on every side, the people a prey to their enemies, the Turks practically in partnership with the Kurds; the result is a famished remnant. This beautiful valley is the home of the Matson, ecclesiastic next in rank to the Patriarch; but the poor man is disheartened, fallen into that despair which yields to the misery upon his people without an effort.

A day's journey north of this district is the plain of Gawar, bounded on the west by

a wall of rocky ramparts under the snowy peaks of Jelu, and on the east by the hills which form the frontier of Persia. This plain is a real granary under good government, but a dismal desert now. For twenty-five years or more before the Russo-Turkish war there was good government; since 1877 all justice and security have fled. Mrs. Bishop described the sad condition four years ago ("Contemporary Review" of the 1st May, 1891, "The Shadow of the Kurds"). Since then famine has been added to the terrible cruelties of Kurds and Turks. The people are scattered, or are crouching in their villages in utter destitution.

Just west of Gawar is Jelu. The just valley is Ishtazin, with five Christian villages. Near them is the powerful tribe of Oramer Kurds, but both Kurds and Christians are well within the power of the Turkish Government. With the connivance of the Turkish Governor the Kurds have driven out the Christians from their own villages and have taken possession. The poor Christians are now in the mountain pastures, unable to return to their homes, and as winter comes on must scatter to the world or perish.

No. 14.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 8.)

(No. 4.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 1, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the proceedings of Tahsin Pasha at Bitlis, and false accusations against Mr. Hallward.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 14.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 21, 1894.

THE following information regarding Tahsin Pasha's recent proceedings at Bitlis, and the false accusation which he endeavoured to trump up against Mr. Hallward, has just reached me from a trustworthy source.

It appears that after Mr. Hallward's visit to Bitlis, a document was prepared by Tahsin Pasha's directions, accusing Mr. Hallward of having incited the Armenians of the town against the Government; and the Mektoubdji, a creature of Tahsin's, was charged to procure a sufficient number of Armenian signatures to this document in support of this accusation.

Amongst others, a certain Mampré Korkmazian was called to the Mektoubdji's office at the Government House, and requested to sign this paper, without his being acquainted with its contents. This he refused to do, upon which the Mektoubdji called in an Armenian paid informer, who was in waiting, and told him to forge the man's signature to the document. This was promptly done in his presence, and the document was then handed to the Juge d'Instruction. Mampré lost no time in informing all his friends of what had happened, and, on their advice, remained for a few days in hiding, but was discovered by the police and thrown into prison for having divulged the means employed in obtaining Armenian signatures.

In all, ten persons accused of having had communications with Mr. Hallward of a nature compromising to the Government have been put into gaol, the principal men among them being Hadgi Serop Shahigian, Jijis Kirkoyan, and Bakalian Effendi, one of the richest Notables of Bitlis.

At about the same time, upon the evidence of a notorious informer named Tabakh Hatchik, two Armenian Notables, both of them members of the Court of Appeal, named Avedis Gagosian and Avedis Hatchmanoukian, were imprisoned on suspicion of having been in treasonable communication with the Tabori Armenians. A house in which these alleged conspirators were supposed to meet was also surrounded and searched, but nothing was discovered excepting some papers hidden in the top of one of the chimneys, on which were rude drawings of guns and cannon, and certain words and figures, such as "400 guns" and "10,000 cartridges," which may well have been placed there by the informer.

One of the leading Armenian ecclesiastics, Der Kevork by name, then sent a

telegram to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, complaining of both these incidents; and he also is said to have been thrown into prison by the Vali. No reply was given directly to the priest's telegram, but the Vali received a message from Constantinople, in consequence of which he requested the Cadi, who is also President of the Court of Appeal, to inquire into the case of the two members of his Court accused of complicity with the Talori people. This the Cadi, who is said to be an upright man, refused to do, not venturing to defy the Vali by proclaiming their innocence, but preferring to have nothing to do with the matter, and the prisoners remain in gaol pending the arrival of the Sassoon Commissioners.

Numerous telegraphic Petitions have been addressed to the Sultan, Grand Vizier, and other Ministers at Constantinople by the Bitlis Armenians, almost all the signatories to which, including the principal men of their community, have been ill-used and imprisoned by the Governor-General. In one of these Petitions, they declare that they can prove that Tahsin Pasha has extorted from them no less a sum than 35,000 liras.

It seems evident that Tahsin Pasha has attempted to found a charge of incitement to revolt against Mr. Hallward, and perhaps other British Consular officers, upon intimidation, false witness, and forgery, and your Excellency can now judge whether I have exaggerated in stating in my telegram of the 17th instant that his suspension, pending inquiry into his conduct, is almost indispensable to a satisfactory issue of the investigation about to be opened.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 15.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 7.)

(No. 6.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 1, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the release of thirty-seven Narman prisoners.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 20, 1894.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to report that thirty-seven of the Narman prisoners have at last been released, seventeen having died in prison, and only ten still remaining in confinement. Of these last, it is believed that five will shortly be set at liberty, and that the remaining five will be punished as accomplices of the Russian-Armenian brigand Kolik Oghlou, of Olti, who now seems to be admitted to have been the real perpetrator of the murder for which these Narman villagers have been made to suffer so heavily.

I also learn that the Armenian Catholic prisoners from Khodoutchour, whose arrest was reported in my despatch of the 30th August, have been released. The Catholic Notable of Erzeroum, Alexan Effendi, whose house was searched in connection with this affair, died shortly afterwards of an illness said to have been brought on by anxiety and excitement.

I trust these somewhat tardy acts of justice, in conjunction with the fact of European Delegates accompanying the Sassoon Commission of Inquiry, will serve to allay the great and growing uneasiness of the Christian population, and so avert the present danger of some act of panic-stricken folly on their part, like that which provoked the massacre of June 1890.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 16.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 8.)

(No. 7.) *Constantinople, January 2, 1895.*

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo in regard to the Armenian question in that vilayet.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 16.

Consul Barnham to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.) *Aleppo, December 7, 1894.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to submit, for the favour of your Excellency's perusal, a Memorandum, in which I have reported certain instances which have recently occurred where Armenians have been made objects of persecution by the Local Government.

Although I think that not one instance, unless we except that of the so-called incendiary fire at Beilan, is of so flagrant a character as of itself to justify the intervention of Her Majesty's Government, I would express my conviction that the situation is extremely critical, that a system of terrorism is in force here, which, I believe, has not been justified by treasonable acts on the part of the Armenians, which has had the effect of awakening the fanaticism of the Mussulman population, and has most seriously affected all commercial enterprise. Frequent instances now occur of insult offered not only to Armenians but to Europeans, and the word "Giaiour" is again in use in the streets.

Trade has received a severe blow, because all transit of goods between Aleppo and the eastern vilayets has ceased. The Aleppo merchant, considering that the Armenian holds his property by too precarious a tenure, refuses to give him credit, and thus Aleppo, which was formerly a depôt from which Manchester goods were exported to the greater part of Asia Minor and Armenia, has lost one of its main sources of prosperity.

Last week I had occasion to speak with his Excellency the Vali on the subject of Mr. Krikor Vehenesdian and the four pupils of the Tarsus Bible Mission, whose release from prison I reported, by telegraph, on the 4th instant, and subsequently Mr. Vice-Consul Catoni had an interview with the Vali on the same subject. The language used by his Excellency on both occasions was so extraordinary, that I feel it my duty to report it to your Excellency textually. He said: "These persons must either be under accusation ('mutehim') or they must be dangerous ('mukhtaralı'). In either case, we can imprison or expel them without giving you any reason why we do so, and if a protégé of the British Government or of any foreign Power is suspected by us, we shall notify the fact to you, and you are bound to expel your protégé at once without asking us on what ground he is suspected."

His Excellency added: "We have instructions to this effect, and, of course, they must have been communicated to you by your Ambassador."

I would add that the part I have taken in this matter has been strictly limited to asking his Excellency as a favour to make inquiry into the case of Mr. Behenesdian, and I made no reply to these observations, nor to the long string of absurd accusations which he made against the Armenians generally. Whatever may be the instructions the Vali has received from the Porte, this question would never have reached so acute a stage were it not for his strong personal bias in the matter, and for the co-operation of the Procureur-Général. Instructions of a more or less stringent character were sent to his predecessor, Osman Pasha, who, however, appears to have treated the Armenians with far less severity, and to have discouraged all vexatious action against them.

Under the present régime, charges are fabricated for the purpose of discrediting the Armenians in the eyes of Europe, and giving the Government an excuse for treating them with severity; and I notice that they rather choose as the theatre of these incidents towns where no foreign Representative resides.

They have adopted a practice of making sudden removals of prisoners from one

vilayet to another, probably with the object of evading the inquiries of foreign Consuls. Thus, ten Armenians were recently arrested at Alexandretta as "suspects," and were sent to Adana, where they now lie in prison, without trial. Similarly Mr. Krikor Behenesdian and his party were at first imprisoned at Adana, and were then removed to Marash in this vilayet. The incidents which have hitherto taken place are, however, but a prelude to more serious troubles, which I fear will shortly occur either at Marash or Zeitoun.

Several warnings have reached me that the Government is preparing to strike a blow against the Armenians in that part of the vilayet; but, unfortunately, owing to the great distance of Marash and Zeitoun from Aleppo, and the absence of any British Representative there, I am unable to ascertain the truth, and it will probably be long after the event that I shall obtain information. Among other little incidents bearing upon the matter, I may mention that the Inspector of the Dette Publique, a Frenchman, wishing to visit Marash on the business of his Administration, applied to the authorities last Sunday for a "Buyuruldu," but it was refused, with an intimation that, for the present, he could not go to Marash—"not for a month or two."

Almost simultaneously with my arrival here, nearly a month ago, a number of mountain-guns arrived from Constantinople, and were forwarded to Marash; and last week the Mutessarif of Marash arrived here, and his arrival occurring at this juncture, I conclude he is to return to his post with full instructions.

I can only conjecture what is in contemplation; but past history, and the language and attitude of the authorities, suggest to me that we shall probably hear that incendiary fires have broken out at Marash or Zeitoun, that the Armenians will be accused and arrested, and, in case of resistance, there will be bloodshed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

Inclosure 2 in No. 16.

Memorandum.

1. In the month of August last ten Armenians were arrested as "suspects" at Alexandretta, sent to Adana, and imprisoned there without trial.

2. In September, twenty Armenians of Beilan were arrested on a charge of being in the possession of rifles (Martini).

These men, among whom were two priests, were brought to Aleppo and imprisoned without trial.

Mr. Vice-Consul Catoni witnessed their arrival, and the behaviour of the crowd who followed, apostrophizing them as "Giaiours."

3. In October, Bedaguan Khatchadrian, a young Armenian of Sivas, proceeding from Sivas to Aintab College, was arrested on the ground that certain letters and school compositions found on his person were of a treasonable character. He is now in prison at Aleppo.

4. The son of Toros Effendi, a well known lawyer of Aleppo, has been sent under escort to Adana, charged with having used inflammatory language against the Government in the presence of his fellow pupils at the Government School in Aleppo.

5. Mr. Krikor Behenesdian and four pupils belonging to the Tarsus Bible Mission were arrested in September while proceeding from Marash to Tarsus, were imprisoned without trial at Adana, then removed to Marash, and subsequently released on the intervention of Her Majesty's Government.

6. The United States' Legation sent a Representative to Aintab early in October to inquire into certain charges made against the American missionaries at that place. On this gentleman's return he passed through Beilan, where he was solicited by the Protestant community to speak to the Kaimakam of Beilan on their behalf. Directly he had embarked at Alexandretta the Kaimakam closed the Protestant chapel and school.

7. Three brothers, known as Hadji, one living at Bireljik, one at Aleppo, and one at Alexandretta, possess a stone quarry in the mountains near Beilan. The brother at Alexandretta sent to his brother a telegram: "Send money; I want to go to the mountain." This simple message was declared by the Government to be treasonable, or, at least, suspicious. The three brothers were arrested and sent to Constantinople.

8. At Kirik Khan, three hours this side of Beilan, all Armenians have been

expelled (Mr. Vice-Consul Catoni's despatch of the 5th October). When Mr. Barnham passed through on the 11th November only one Armenian remained, being in charge of a khan, and this man told Mr. Barnham that all his money had been taken from him by the Kaimakam of Beilan, who sent a policeman every few days to seize his earnings.

9. On the 5th November last a fire broke out in the bazaar at Beilan, destroying about sixty shops, as well as the house of the Mufti and the Tekké. Three days after the fire the authorities seized a declaration, stating that the fire was caused by the Armenians.

A Judicial Commission has been instructed to inquire into this matter, but it is to be observed that by far the greater number of the shops burnt belonged to Armenians, and there is very grave doubt whether the declaration referred to is not a forgery, and the fire the result of a deliberate plot conceived by the local authorities.

(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM, *Consul.*

Aleppo, December 7, 1894.

No. 17.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 8.)

(No. 9.)

Pera, January 3, 1895.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 7 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to acquaint your Lordship that I instructed Mr. Block to call the serious attention of the Grand Vizier to the statements contained in Mr. Barnham's despatch No. 40 of the 7th ultimo, and to point out to him the disastrous effect which such a policy as that now followed by Provincial Governors might produce.

His Excellency took exception to the frequent interference of this Embassy in Armenian affairs, and alleged that the information supplied by Her Majesty's Consular officers and others was frequently exaggerated, if not entirely false. He took note, however, of the various cases mentioned in the despatch, and said he would inquire into them.

In my telegram No. 269 of the 31st ultimo I reported the opinion expressed by the Grand Vizier in regard to Mr. Beheneslian.

According to a telegram which his Highness said that he had received in regard to the burning of houses at Beylan, it appeared that fifty-four Moslem and thirty-four Christian houses had been burned, and that Mr. Barnham's information was therefore incorrect.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 18.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 8, 1895.*

HER Majesty's Government have given full consideration to the Sultan's complaint of Mr. Gladstone's recent speech on the Armenian question, as reported in your telegram No. 4 of the 2nd instant.

I authorize you to inform the Sultan that Her Majesty's Government have no control over Mr. Gladstone's language, and are not responsible for it. He is not a member of the Ministry and does not hold office under the Crown. But that, as the subject has been raised by His Majesty, Her Majesty's Government cannot conceal from him that in this respect Mr. Gladstone represents the general public feeling in this country, which will not be satisfied with anything short of an honest and thorough inquiry, followed by the adequate punishment of the guilty parties, if the inquiry should show the existence of guilt.

No. 19.

Sir H. Drummond Wolff to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 3. Confidential.)

Madrid, January 3, 1895.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 110 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to inclose a copy and translation of a Memorandum furnished me by Señor Groizard respecting the application made by the Sultan to the Pope, asking for the intervention of the Holy See in the question of Armenia.

The Memorandum is, I believe, merely an extract from a private letter addressed by Señor Merry del Val, the Spanish Ambassador at the Vatican, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. DRUMMOND WOLFF.

Inclosure in No. 19.

Memorandum.

(Translation.)

ACCORDING to information from Rome, the Pope has applied to Spain for the mediation of the Spanish Government with Russia and Great Britain to moderate their requirements *vis-à-vis* to Turkey in the conflict in Armenia. The Pope is, in the first instance, moved to respond to this appeal by the entreaties of the Sultan, who, in soliciting the good offices of the Holy See, shows the consideration in which the person of the Pontiff is held, even among Mahommedans; but there is a further motive, more indirect, but perhaps more powerful, in the fear that if the interests of the schismatics are too strongly favoured, those of the Catholic Armenians may suffer.

His Holiness has already approached the Cabinets of Paris, Berlin, and Vienna in this sense, but, nevertheless, he does not hesitate to ask the support of Spain, although that Power has no interest in the Turkish provinces of Armenia, in the assurance that our conciliatory counsels will produce a favourable impression on England and Russia.

No. 20.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 15 A.)

Foreign Office, January 9, 1895.

Sir,

THE Turkish Ambassador called at the Foreign Office on the 3rd instant, and saw Sir T. Sanderson in my absence.

His Excellency said that he came in pursuance of instructions which he had received from the Sultan, both through His Majesty's First Secretary and through the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to express the indignation which had been occasioned by the language used by Mr. Gladstone in his reply to the Armenian deputation at Hawarden.

Mr. Gladstone, his Excellency said, though beginning with advice that the public should suspend their judgment until the facts with regard to the alleged massacres in the Sassoon district had been ascertained, went on to speak as if the truth of the reports had already been fully established, and had used expressions of the most insulting kind towards the Turkish nation and the Sultan as their Head. The Sultan felt that he had a right to call upon Her Majesty's Government to disavow language of this kind used by one of the first of English statesmen and public men, and Rustem Pasha said that nothing short of such a disavowal made publicly by some member of the Government would be satisfactory to His Majesty.

Sir T. Sanderson denied that in any part of the speech Mr. Gladstone had taken the reports of massacres as proved, and said that the observations to which his Excellency took so much exception were all of them made conditional on such proof being eventually furnished, nor could it be said that any personal attack had been made upon the Sultan. Finally, he begged Rustem Pasha to remember that Mr. Gladstone was not a member of the Government, and that the position of the Government itself in regard to the question

had been defined in a speech made by me some time ago which had appeared in the newspapers. He promised, however, to report Rustem Pasha's communication to me without delay.

His Excellency called again on the 5th instant, and was informed by Sir T. Sanderson that the reply which he was instructed to give was to the effect that the Government could not hold themselves responsible for Mr. Gladstone's utterances, and did not consider that they could be called upon to give explanations in regard to them.

Rustem Pasha expressed his regret at this reply, which he said would be considered at Constantinople as unfriendly. His Excellency said that he would come to see me on my arrival in town a few days later.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 21.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 15 B.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 9, 1895.*

IN the course of the observations made by Rustem Pasha on the 5th instant on Mr. Gladstone's speech to the Armenian deputation at Hawarden, as recorded in my despatch No. 15 A of this date, his Excellency commented on the injustice of assuming, as Mr. Gladstone had done, that any massacres in the Sassoon district, if they had occurred, had been countenanced by the Sultan or the Porte.

This, he said, was exactly the reverse of the fact. The instructions which he had received stated distinctly not only that the Sultan had ordered the most stringent inquiry into the conduct of his troops, but that the most severe punishment would be inflicted on any one who had been guilty of outrages.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 22.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir H. Drummond Wolff.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 9, 1895.*

THE Spanish Ambassador called at this Office to-day, and read to me a despatch from his Government instructing him to inform me that the Sultan having requested the Pope to use his good offices to induce Her Majesty's Government not to press too hardly upon Turkey with regard to the Armenians, His Holiness had asked the Spanish Government, as not being concerned in the matter, to be the medium of a communication to this effect to Her Majesty's Government.

The Pope had expressed his apprehension that the interests of the Catholic Armenians might suffer from concessions made to the "schismatic" Armenians.

His Excellency added that a similar communication would be addressed to the Governments of France and Russia.

I replied that I did not understand how the interests of the Catholic Armenians could suffer, as any measures of reform of the administration which might be recommended eventually by the Powers would certainly include all Armenians, without regard to creed.

I could only say that Her Majesty's Government would not go beyond what the necessity of the case might appear to require.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 23.

Mr. D. Deuvletian to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 10.)

35, *Granville Street, Upper Brook Street, Manchester, January* 9, 1895.

My Lord,

THE terrible news which has reached me at this moment from the prison of Erzinghian, where my unfortunate brother Nichan, with his fifty-eight fellow prisoners, are lying since 1892, and who have been recently condemned by the local Criminal Court as follows: Twenty-four to death, thirty-one hard labour for life, and three, who were fortunate enough to pay their ransom, have been released.

My Lord, as the Foreign Office is aware (for I have drawn its attention to this matter in 1893), these unfortunate Armenians were accused for the murder of a Turk named Eomer, who has been found dead one morning beside his wife.

The murder has taken place in a village named Grand Arndan, in the district of Kemah, and in the Vilayet of Erzinghian. Everybody in the village knew the murderer, who was a Turk, and connected with Eomer's wife, who, in accord with her, have decided to get rid of him while he was in a sleep.

The Kaimakam, who was on the scene the day following the murder, found ample proofs on the guilty persons, but would not touch them, for there were the Armenian Christians at hand, and it was a good opportunity for him to do with them once for all.

So he ordered to be arrested all the Armenians of that village and be thrown in the local prison, where, after twelve months' indescribable torture, he subsequently sent them to the Erzinghian prison (three days' distance from the village), to be tried before the high officials, where, also, after two years' torture and starvation, finally have been tried and found guilty as revolutionists, and been condemned most cruelly and unjustly, notwithstanding their innocence.

My Lord, the fate of these condemned—that are at the mercy of their butchers—and their families, who are in the depth of their miseries, hopeless and deprived of any support whatever, begged me to put this fact before your Lordship, and to crave your Lordship's strong hand to this matter. Any delay will darken the lives of these unfortunate ones.

My Lord, as a protector of my mother-country (Armenia), the scene of which is now very much like a slaughter-house, I humbly appeal to your Lordship's liberal sentiment and protection, being confident that a strong representation on the part of your Lordship will suffice to save the lives of the condemned ones, and, with a fair trial, to prove their innocence and return to their homes, where their families are praying night and day for the life of their noble protector and for the deliverance of their beloved ones.

Leaving the matter into your Lordship's hands, and apologizing for the liberty I have taken, I have, &c.

(Signed) D. DEUVLETIAN.

Inclosure in No. 23.

Extract from the "Morning Post" of January 9, 1895.

Vienna, January 8, 1895.

ADVICES from Erzingian, received here by way of Constantinople, give an account of a trial of Armenians which took place before the Criminal Court at that place on the 15th December. The prisoners were fifty-eight in number. Twenty-four of them were sentenced to death, five to hard labour for life, and the remainder to terms ranging from three to six years' hard labour. Fifteen were condemned for political offences. Those upon whom the death sentence was passed included sixteen men who were charged with being concerned in the murder of a Mussulman at Arndan, a village in the district of Kemah. Some of the alleged murderers produced passports proving that they were in Constantinople at the time the Mussulman was killed, but they were condemned to death nevertheless. The capital sentence was passed, among others, on a well-known Armenian *littérateur*, while Bishop Vartan, of Kumah, was sentenced to three years' hard labour.

In a further despatch from Constantinople it is stated that the Sultan recently sent officers of high rank to the Governors of the Turkish Asiatic provinces with special instructions to the Governors to show a more benevolent attitude towards the Armenian population.

No. 24.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 10.)

(No. 9.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 10, 1895, 9·45 P.M.*

IN consequence of some doubt as to the interpretation of the general instructions, we have sent a joint telegram to our Consuls at Erzeroum to the following effect:—

"The functions of the Delegates will not begin until the Commission has been duly constituted and has entered upon its duties.

"They may then, as laid down in their general instructions, point out to the Commission the persons whom it should call as witnesses, and the places it should visit.

"In giving such indications the Delegates should, as far as possible, act in concert, but every Delegate also has the right to act singly in this respect.

"Outside the Commission the Delegates must not take any joint action in the way of summoning or interrogating witnesses. Their business is not to hold a separate inquiry, but only to superintend the general inquiry of the Commission, and the depositions of witnesses can only be taken before the Commission. The Delegates, however, are at liberty to note and report to their respective Ambassadors anything they may learn from outside sources."

The Commissioners and Delegates leave Erzeroum to-morrow. The Delegates are to ask the Commission, as soon as it meets, for the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis during its sittings.

I have authorized Mr. Graves to impart, confidentially, information respecting the Commission to his Italian colleague.

No. 25.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 16.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 10, 1895.*

THE Turkish Ambassador called upon me yesterday evening at this Office, and read to me, in pursuance of instructions, a despatch from Said Pasha strongly remonstrating against the observations made by Mr. Gladstone in his recent speech to an Armenian deputation at Hawarden, and urging that Her Majesty's Government should express their regret at the insulting language used in that speech towards the Sultan, of which His Majesty considered that he had just reason to complain.

Rustem Pasha added that he was instructed to ask me how he could remain as Ambassador in London if Her Majesty's Government refused to give the Sultan satisfaction for the insults which he had received.

I said that, in reply to a telegram which your Excellency had addressed to me on the same subject, I had instructed you to explain that Mr. Gladstone is not a member of the Ministry, and that Her Majesty's Government have no control over, or responsibility for, the language used by him, adding that, as the Sultan had raised the subject, I could not conceal from His Majesty that Mr. Gladstone had expressed the general public feeling in this country, which will only be satisfied by a genuine and searching investigation, followed by the condign punishment of the guilty, if guilty there are proved to be. I could only repeat the same answer to his present communication. It would be quite contrary to precedent that Her Majesty's Government should accept any responsibility for the language of any private person, however eminent, or admit the right of any foreign Government to demand explanations on the subject of such utterances.

As Rustem Pasha pressed much for a further consideration of the matter, I said I would report the communication he had made to the Cabinet, which was to meet to-day, and would see him again afterwards.

His Excellency called again after the Cabinet, and I informed him that my colleagues entirely concurred in my answer.

As regarded the question which he had put to me of his remaining in London, I told him that I could only say that I could not see that there was anything in what had occurred which should affect the diplomatic relations between the two Governments. We had carefully abstained from expressing any opinion upon the alleged massacres and outrages in the Sassoon district pending the report of the Commission.

Rustem Pasha urged upon me the disastrous effect which this refusal of satisfaction to the Sultan might have on the relations between the two countries, but I expressed my regret that I was unable to modify my answer.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 26.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 8.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 11, 1895.*

I APPROVE the joint instructions to the Delegates on the Bitlis Commission which have been sent by your Excellency and the French and Russian Ambassadors to the respective Consuls at Erzeroum, and also the proposed application for the suspension, during the inquiry, of the Vali of Bitlis, as reported in your telegram No. 9 of this day.

No. 27.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 17 A.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 11, 1895.*

I TRANSMIT, for your Excellency's information, a copy of a letter from Mr. D. Deuvletian,* who writes in great anxiety as to the fate of his brother Nichan, and of the other Armenians imprisoned at Erzinghian. Twenty-four of these are said to be condemned to death, and Mr. Deuvletian requests that representations may be made on their behalf.

Particulars respecting these prisoners were furnished by Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in a report, of which you forwarded a copy in your despatch No. 157 of the 5th April last.

I telegraphed to your Excellency to-day on this subject, and requested you to inform me whether there was any chance of the sentences on the prisoners being revised.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 28.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 12.)

(No. 11.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 12, 1895, 11 A.M.*

I HEAR that the authorities at Kara-Hissar have released thirty-eight of the Armenian prisoners mentioned in my despatch No. 24 of the 10th January.

No. 29.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 13.)

(No. 12.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 13, 1895, 11·10 A.M.*

THE foreign Delegates and the Turkish members of the Commission started to-day for Moush from Erzeroum. It will take them more than a week to reach their destination.

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* No. 29.

No. 30.

M. Harabedian to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 13.)

(Télégraphique.)

Galatz, le 13 *Janvier*, 1895.

NOUS sommes ici à Galatz, Roumanie, pays que nous bénissons pour l'excellente hospitalité qu'il nous accorde, une colonie de 800 Arméniens réfugiés de notre pays natal, la malheureuse mouche tant éprouvée ces derniers temps, et est ici loin de nos enfants, de tous nos parents, que Dieu sait s'ils vivent encore, devons passer tristement ces jours de fêtes si chères à tout Chrétien, et dans le malheur qui nous accable nous trouvons une consolation en venant vous remercier du fond de l'âme pour l'intérêt que vous portez à nos frères et à notre patrie. Que Dieu le Tout-Puissant bénisse Sa Majesté la Reine, ses conseillers, et son pays.

Au nom des 800 Arméniens de Mouche réfugiés en Roumanie.

No. 31.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

(No. 10.)

Constantinople, January 4, 1895.

My Lord,

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram No. 149 of the 28th ultimo, I spoke to my French and Russian colleagues in regard to the wish of Her Majesty's Government to make a formal reservation of their right to send Consul Graves to the Commission if it should be found that the inquiry was not proceeding satisfactorily.

They were both of opinion that such a reservation was unnecessary as they considered that the three Powers retained the right under the original proposals of the Porte of sending their Consuls if they saw fit. According to their view it would be sufficient, if the necessity arose, that we should order our Consuls to take the places of the Delegates and inform the Porte that we had done so.

They no longer, however, offered any objection to my making the proposed reservation.

I accordingly desired Mr. Block to speak to Said Pasha in the sense of your Lordship's telegram No. 149; and he yesterday formally informed his Excellency that in case of any difficulties with regard to the Commission Her Majesty's Government reserved the right to send their Consul to replace the Delegate. He added that this reservation was made with the concurrence of the French and Russian Governments.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 32.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

(No. 13.)

Pera, January 4, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a translation of an official "Communiqué" which has appeared in the Turkish newspapers announcing the peaceful state of the Vilayet of Bitlis.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 32.

Extract from the "Tarik" of January 3, 1895.

(Official "Communiqué.")

(Translation.)

A TELEGRAM dated the 19th (31st) December, 1894, from his Excellency Hassan Tahsin Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, states that, under the auspices of His Imperial Majesty, perfect peace and order reign throughout the vilayet.

No. 33.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

(No. 14.)

Constantinople, January 7, 1895.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 188 of the 8th November, I have received information that Abdoulrazzack Bey is at present living at 50, King's Road, Brighton. He is a son of Nedjib Pasha, and grandson of Beder Khan Bey, the notorious feudal Kurdish Chief, who was exiled after the Nestorian massacre. He served in the Turkish Diplomatic Service as Third Secretary at St. Petersburgh, and returned to Constantinople in 1890 or 1891.

His brother Osman headed a rising of Bohtan Kurds in 1879-80, and after the town and Government of Tezireh, on the Tigris, had been seized, another brother, Bahri Bey, a Palace Aide-de-camp, was sent out to arrange matters.

He himself had conceived the idea of a Kurdish autonomous Principality, and in 1891 proceeded to Trans-Caucasia, and was the guest of Kurdish Chiefs near Erivan, and also visited Hekkiari, but he found the chances of establishing an independent district very small. He was sent for by the Turkish authorities, and was obliged to return to Constantinople.

In September 1894 it was reported that he was acting in Russian interests, and a letter appeared in the "Times" to this effect, which was quoted in the inclosure of my despatch No. 483 of the 17th October, 1894. This information, however, was incorrect.

The Turkish Government, on hearing that he had set out again, requested the Russian Government to stop him and send him back. He was stopped at Tiflis or Erivan; he then proceeded to England.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 34.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

(No. 15.)

Constantinople, January 8, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copies of despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora, giving information respecting the progress of the works on the Anatolian Railway extension, and reporting the opening of the Eski-Shehir-Alayund-Kutaya branch.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 34.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

Angora, October 10, 1894.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to send your Excellency the latest particulars I have obtained regarding the works on the Eski-Sheir-Koniah Railway.

Of the section Eski-Sheir-Alayund 30 kilom. are quite finished, and on the remaining 36 kilom. there is not much more to be done, so that it is hoped this portion will be ready for traffic by the 1st January next.

The branch-line Alayund-Kutayah, 10 kilom., is also completed, but the bridges are temporary wooden ones.

The Alayund-Afium-Kara-Hissar section, 230 kilom., is ballasted, but as the bridges are not finished nor all the rails laid, this section will not be ready till next spring at the earliest.

On the Afium-Kara-Hissar-Ak-Sheir section the contracts for the earthworks and ballasting have only recently been given out.

Beyond Ak-Sheir no work has commenced nor are there any signs of preparations for the extension from Angora to Cesarea.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 34.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

Angora, January 3, 1895.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch of the 10th October last on the subject of the Eski-Sheir-Koniah railway, I have the honour to report that the new line as far as Alayund and the short branch line to Kutayah were opened to the traffic on the 1st instant, as predicted in my afore-mentioned despatch.

A daily service both ways for passengers as well as goods has been established, the journey taking about four hours, and the intermediate stations being Keuktché-Kissik and Sapoundji-Boumar.

The prolongation of the line beyond Alayund is being actively carried on.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 35.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 16.)

Constantinople, January 8, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, transmitting a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting a proposed settlement of Circassians in the Hekkiari, and the position of Nestorians in that district.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 35.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Erzeroum, December 26, 1894.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting on the proposed settlement of Circassian immigrants in the eastern district of the Sandjak of Hekkiari, bordering on Persia, and also on the position of the Nestorian Christians of the same districts, whom it is proposed to oblige to pay taxes, with the alternative of leaving the country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 35.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Van, December 18, 1894.

Sir,

I HEAR, from a reliable source, that the Government intend to settle Circassian immigrants next spring in the plain of Khumaru, between Gaever and Shemdinan, in the east of Hekkiari. There were formerly seven or eight Nestorian villages there, but a few years ago the villagers were so harassed by the Herki Kurds that they all emigrated, and now the villages are deserted.

In 1888 a report (which proved to be false) was current in Van that a settlement of immigrant Circassians was about to take place in the Vilayets of Van and Erzeroum. On that occasion Colonel Chermside, in a report from Erzeroum to Sir W. White, under date of the 14th August, 1888, stated that a Convention existed between Russia and Turkey by which no Circassians were to be established in Asia Minor east of Sivas (*vide* "Turkey No. 1, 1889," p. 21).

As there has been a very considerable emigration of Christians in the last two

years from this vilayet, especially from the district of Adeljevaz, north of the lake, and from the districts on the Persian frontier, with consequent loss of revenue to the Treasury, I suppose that the Government would be glad to encourage Circassian immigration on a large scale, as the modern element would thereby be strengthened, and a class of peasants more industrious and more civilized than the Kurds would be settled on the land.

The Government have lately been again insisting that the tribal Nestorians in Hekkiari must pay some taxes according to their means, or else leave the country. This threat of forcing them to emigrate had not, I believe, hitherto been used by the authorities—at any rate openly—and would seem to indicate that in the event of their departure immigrants might be found to take their place.

The Nestorians' excuse for non-payment of taxes is the abject poverty in which they are forced to live in their native mountains, not being able to trade profitably with the towns owing to the entire absence of security caused by the Kurdish tribes who live all round them, the same trouble, in fact, which has caused so many lowland Nestorians and Armenians to expatriate themselves.

Should the Government forcibly persist in their demand for taxes, it seems probable either that the Nestorians will resist, and bloodshed will ensue, or that they will choose the alternative of leaving the country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 36.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 17.)

Constantinople, January 8, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting documents which he has communicated to Mr. Shipley relating to recent events in Sassoon.

I have communicated copies of these documents to my French and Russian colleagues.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 36.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Erzeroum, December 27, 1894.

Sir,

IN order that Mr. Shipley, while serving as Delegate with the Sassoon Commission of Inquiry, may be fully provided with all the information in my possession bearing upon the recent disturbances, I have supplied him, in addition to copies or précis of all my despatches and those of Messrs. Hallward and Boyajian upon this subject, with a Memorandum, copies of which I have the honour to inclose, containing a brief summary of the whole affair from its origin as far as I am acquainted with it. To this is annexed a list of twenty-seven names of villages, out of thirty-two which are now said to have been destroyed, with a rough estimate of their population, which I trust Mr. Shipley will have an opportunity of verifying and correcting.

I have communicated this list to my Russian colleague at his own request.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 36.

Memorandum by Consul Graves.

ALTHOUGH for two or three years past the Government have been aware of the presence of a certain number of political agitators in the Sassoon district, their more serious attention was drawn to the fact at about the beginning of June 1893, when the Armenian agitator Damadian was captured near Moush, and taken to Bitlis, where he remained several months, being subsequently removed to Constantinople. He is supposed to have made important revelations as to sedition in Sassoon and elsewhere, and to have been released or allowed to escape in consequence.

In July 1893 hostilities occurred between the Kurds, instigated by the Sheikh of Zillan or Zilch, and the Armenian villages of Talori Nahié. The Kurds engaged seem to have been chiefly nomads from Sairt (Bohtan) and Diarbekir, namely, the Rashkotanli, Bekiranli, and (?) Badikanli tribes, who are accustomed to summer in the Sassoon and Moush mountains, but had been for some time past prevented from doing so owing to their unruly and lawless conduct. A Turkish battalion used to be stationed in summer at Kab-il-Jevs in Sassoon to keep them in order.

The Talori Armenians withdrew to a stronghold which they had prepared, and successfully defended themselves against the attacks of the Kurds, who ultimately withdrew, and retired southwards to their winter quarters.

The Governor of Gendj, Mustapha Pasha, who arrived later on the scene with zaptiehs and soldiers, arrested some of the leading Armenians, and sent them to Bitlis, and reported that the Talori people were in revolt against the Government. The bulk of the Armenians remained in their stronghold until the winter, when the troops withdrew, and they came down.

Mustapha Pasha was shortly afterwards dismissed, and it is believed in consequence of correspondence between Surri Pasha, Vali of Diarbekir, and the Porte, Surri Pasha's views as to his misconduct being freely expressed. He was succeeded by Ibrahim Kiamil Pasha, of Mardin, whose misconduct while Governor of Bayazid twelve years ago was notorious.

It might have been supposed that after this experience the Bitlis authorities would this year have forbidden the entry of the nomad Kurds into Sassoon, lest their attacks on Talori should be renewed. However, they were allowed to enter, and shortly began minor acts of hostility towards the Armenians. It is suggested that the Bitlis authorities intended to make use of them for the purpose of breaking the strength of the Sassoon Armenians, whose offences were:—

1. That they paid no taxes to Government, but to the neighbouring Kurd Aghas, whose serfs they were.

2. That they were known to harbour a certain number of political agitators, such as Damadian, and had probably been denounced by the latter as ripe for a revolt against the Government.

3. That their Notables had avoided being squeezed by the Vali of Bitlis by steadily refusing his pressing invitations to appear before him at that city. And it is asserted that, apparently for the purpose of gaining credit for the repression of a dangerous revolt, and at the same time covering the traces of his own misgovernment, Tahsin Pasha resolved first to push on the Kurds to destroy the Sassoon villages, and then, if they failed, to invoke the aid of the Imperial troops in completing their destruction.

Early this summer the Kaimakam of Koulp was sent to claim arrears of taxes from the Talori Nahié. On the inhabitants declaring that they were ready to pay Government taxes if the Government would protect them from Kurdish exactions, but that otherwise it was impossible for them to do so, he proceeded to abuse and maltreat them. They then lost their temper, fell upon him, and after administering a severe beating drove him and his zaptiehs from the district. He then reported that they were in armed rebellion against the Government, and that a large military force would be required to reduce them. About 300 troops and zaptiehs were sent to the spot, but the Armenians retired into their stronghold, and the officer in command refrained from attacking. Probably about the same time, i.e., towards the end of June 1894, an invitation of the Vali Tahsin Pasha to some of the Notables of Gholié Guzan to come to Bitlis was disregarded by them, and a small force of soldiers who went to Shenik and Semal, in the same nahié, and arrested five of the inhabitants, were pursued by armed villagers, and four of their prisoners rescued.

The nomad Kurds from the south, who, under these critical circumstances, should never have been allowed to enter the district, this year showed themselves especially hostile to the Armenians who had successfully repulsed them in 1893. Apparently about the beginning of August a raid was made upon one of the smaller villages in the Shatakh district by Kurds, variously described as Bekiranli tribesmen, or Kurds of Khiyan, in the Gendj district, and about 200 sheep were driven off. The Armenians pursued them, and an affray followed in which some Kurds were killed. The Kurds then came to Moosh and complained to the Mutessarif, and at once extensive, and, indeed, most disproportionate measures were taken to avenge them by the Vali of Bitlis. On the pretext that the Sassoon Armenians were now in open rebellion, which appears to have been believed by the Central Government, the reserves of the 7th Division were called out, troops were concentrated at Moosh and Bitlis from Erzingian, Erzeroum, Van, Kharpout, and other garrisons, while the well-known Kurdish Sheikh Mehmet was encouraged by the Vali to collect a large horde of Kurdish irregulars to co-operate with the troops.

Active operations were begun about the 19th August, and appear to have been chiefly confined to the two groups of almost entirely Armenian villages of the Talori Nahié and that of Shatakh, the names of which are given approximately in the annexed Tables. Serious resistance seems only to have been encountered in the former, and at the outset the Kurds were pushed forward to the attacks, and repulsed, as they had been last year. Regular troops were then employed, and the Armenians, seeing the futility of further resistance, surrendered, and were slaughtered in cold blood.

In the Shatakh district, on the other hand, practically no resistance appears to have been made, the troops entering the villages quietly on the pretence of protecting them from the Kurds, and then indiscriminately massacring the inhabitants under revoltingcircumstances of violation and torture.

About thirty-two villages are said to have been destroyed, and 3,000 to 4,000 persons killed during a period of twenty-three days, ending 10th September, when the Mushir Zekki Pasha appeared on the scene, and put a stop to further slaughter by taking over command from the Colonels Tewfik Bey and Ismail Bey, who were in charge of the military operations, and upon whom, together with the Vali of Bitlis and his subordinates, the responsibility of what has occurred must devolve, unless it is made clear that they acted under superior orders.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 3 in No. 36.

VILLAGES of Talori, Koulph Caza, Gendj Sandjak.

Name of Village.	Armenian Houses.	Armenian Inhabitants.	Observations.
Talori			Caza of *Koulph* (Gendj Sandjak) Nahié of Talori or *Tirlevrig*, about nine hours from Moush S.W. or S.S.W.
Hartk			
Yeghgurt ..			
Pourkh ..	250	3,000	There are practically no Kurds resident in this nahié. Estimated number of houses from private sources, and number of inhabitants by multiplying number of houses by 12, that being average of *Gueour* villages on Colonel Everett's list. *Talori Village.*—Some of the survivors are said to have returned, and to be now inhabiting the village.
Servank ..			
Keghékrank ..			
Hityonk (?) Upper			
,, (?) Lower			
Hosnerk	24	288	Near Talori, but not in nahié.
Enguzik	25	300	,, ,,
Kahhensor	40	480	,, ,, Two priests, Hatchadour and Perkis, were killed. Some of the survivors said to have returned to village.
Aldvank	30	360	(?) Caza of Gendj, district of Khirjan, about four hours from Talori.

Inclosure 4 in No. 36.

VILLAGES in Shatakh District: two or three in Moush Caza, the rest in Sassoon Caza.

Name of Village.	Armenian Houses (oldest).	Armenian Inhabitants (oldest).	Observations.
			District of Shatakh about five hours south of Moush. All these villages are said to have been entirely ruined, except two, but rebuilt by soldiers after events of August–September 1894. Two or three of the first on the list belong to Moush Caza, the rest to Sassoon Caza.
Shenik	30	454	A few Kurd houses.
Semal	25	360	
Ghelié Guzan	108	1,618	A few Kurd houses.
Aghpi	50	385	
Khotzotz Vank	7	94	A few Kurd houses. Village said to be only partly destroyed.
Kop	15	171	
Erotzank	12	183	
*Aghbin (? Upper)	30	360	
„ (? Lower)			
Hitenk	40	424	
Dubig	10	107	A few Kurd houses.
Shoushimmerk	10	91	
Kéghashen	14	97	Said to be only partly destroyed.
*Ghelégenani	10	120	(?) Ghelin is also given as an alternative name.
*Geurmav	18	216	

No. 37.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 20.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 9, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a statement which has appeared in the Turkish newspaper, reporting the discovery of Armenian sedition at Van and Erzingian.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 37.

Extract from the "Turik" of January 6, 1895.

(Translation.)

ACCORDING to a telegram from the Marshal of the 4th Army Corps (at Erzingian) two kinds of materials, procured by disaffected Armenians for incendiary purposes, have been seized, and the matter has been investigated before an extraordinary court-martial. It would appear, after inquiry, that the materials in question consist of some dangerous inflammable substances.

It is reported from Van that some seditious literature has been found in the possession of a certain Armenian bookseller of that town, named Dikran, and that he is now undergoing his trial.

* These villages are not in Colonel Everett's list. Number of houses from a private estimate. Number of inhabitants obtained by multiplying number of houses by 12, that being the average for villages on Colonel Everett's list.

No. 38.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 21.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 9, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 583 of the 19th December respecting the attitude of the Armenian Catholic Patriarch, I have the honour to report that his Beatitude has apparently been entirely won over by the Palace, and has telegraphed to his Bishop in Moush, directing the latter to give every facility to the Commission in finding Catholic Armenians ready to give evidence in favour of the Government. Mgr. Azarian has, in consequence of his attitude, received several threatening letters, and last Sunday requested the Turkish Government to protect him when officiating pontifically.

The church was accordingly surrounded by troops, police and secret agents being posted inside. In consequence, a large number of the congregation left the building.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 39.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 22.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 9, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 604 of the 27th December, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the election of Mgr. Ismirlian as Patriarch of the Gregorian Armenians was confirmed by the Sultan on the 2nd instant.

On Monday last, his Beatitude was solemnly conducted from Scutari to Stamboul in a special steamer, on leaving which he drove to the Patriarchate at Koum Kapou, in Stamboul, his carriage being followed by about 3,000 Armenians. The interior of the Cathedral, and the space round it, were packed with an enthusiastic crowd of about 10,000 persons, who received the Patriarch with shouts of applause.

After taking the oath of fidelity in the usual form he gave an Address, in which he said that his fidelity was of a triple character: fidelity to the Government, fidelity to the Armenian nation, and fidelity to the Constitution.

"First," said his Beatitude, "comes my fidelity to the Government. This oath is clearly bound up with the right we possess to life, property, and honour, to be enjoyed in security. Any declaration of fidelity not dependent on this condition would be a falsehood fraught with danger to the interests of the nation and the Government. Any desire, any demand, any complaints, any steps taken with the object of insuring our enjoyment of these rights, far from being a violation of my oath of fidelity, will merely amount to a proof of my sentiments of true fidelity.

"Secondly, my fidelity to the nation is fidelity to the Church, because it is the duty of our Apostolical Church not to separate itself from the rights of the people. The rights of our Church and nation are sacred and imprescriptible."

"Your Patriarch will be the faithful defender and interpreter of these rights, of which he is but the custodian, and for the proper exercise of which he is answerable to the Church and nation.

"Thirdly, with regard to the Constitution which provides for the conduct of our internal affairs, my past career is a guarantee that no effort on my part will be wanting to insure its execution in every particular."

I am confidentially informed that Mgr. Ismirlian contemplates demanding that two Armenians shall take part in the Sassoon Commission, and that he may possibly address the Representatives of the Great Powers on the subject. Further, he is said to have declined to enter into any communications with the Catholic Armenian Patriarch, unless the latter withdraw the documents published in his name, which were transmitted to your Lordship in my despatch No. 583 of the 19th December.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 40.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 23.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 9, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a Report, which I have received from a private source, on the recent massacre of Armenians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 40.

Memorandum.

A PEASANT from the village of Kamirteh, one hour's distance from Achlat, in the Bitlis Caza, has arrived here, and gives the following account of the events last autumn in the Sassoon district, obtained from people living in Bitlis, and from a young man who managed to escape from the Sassoon Mountains and sought refuge at Kamirteh.

The doings of the Kurds and the troops in the Sassoon district have now spread to every Armenian village, filling the inhabitants with consternation and terror, as there is no telling which will be the next village to suffer. Things had come to such a pass that it sufficed for some Kurd to denounce the inhabitants of an Armenian village as rebels in order to bring about the same visitation as that meted out to the unfortunate people of Sassoon.

This is precisely what happened to the villages of that district, said to be thirty-two in number, with a population of about 8,000 souls. The Sassoon trouble began by one of those periodical quarrels between Kurds and Armenians which culminated in serious fighting, and in which the Kurds were successfully repulsed. As usual, the latter had plundered their sheep and cattle, which, however, the Armenians succeeded in recapturing. The defeated Kurds finally came down to the Vali of Bitlis and reported that the Sassoon Armenians were in open revolt; whereupon the Vali, without inquiring into the cause of the trouble, is reported to have telegraphed the statement made by the Kurds to Constantinople, asking at the same time for instructions. These instructions duly reached the Vali, who forthwith took the necessary steps to stamp out the supposed rising, with the result already known. Thirty-two villages are said to have been more or less destroyed, while eight of the number were completely laid in ruins, and the greater part of the inhabitants—men, women, and children—massacred in the most fiendish manner. My informant positively asserts that the regular troops took part in these hellish operations, too terrible to describe. For instance, he states that little children were raised from the ground by their hair and their heads severed from their bodies by yataghans. Men and women were hacked to pieces, and portions of their bodies thrown to the dogs, with the cry, "Away with the remains of this filthy nation!" One hundred women were handed over to the troops for immoral purposes, and finally sent on to Van. The scenes on the road to Van are described as of a most heartrending nature, by the wailing and weeping of the women, and by their cries for mercy, all of which were of no avail; they were hustled along most unmercifully, and their fate is at present unknown.

A Kurdish Chief remonstrated with the troops, and warned them that the carrying away of these women would bring on them (the troops) serious consequences; his remonstrances, however, were not heeded. A small portion of the inhabitants managed to effect their escape: their exact number and actual whereabouts are at present unknown. The inhabitants of three villages in the Moush Plain, viz., Vartenis, Ardouk, and Mushakshan, comprising together about 750 houses, have dispersed to various parts of the province, the villages having been plundered of everything by the Kurds out of revenge for their defeat in the Sassoon Mountains, although the people had nothing to do with the dispute between the Kurds and Armenians in the mountains. The Kurds further plundered the villages between Moush, Huns, and Passen; a large portion of the inhabitants of these villages crossed over into Russia. The Kurds engaged in the Sassoon operations were the Hamidieh irregular cavalry, aided by Bashi-Bazouks, and subsequently reinforced by troops dispatched from Bitlis, Moush, Van, Mossul, and Erzinghian.

On the conclusion of the operations the Vali of Bitlis gave orders that the Armenians of the district were to sign a statement setting forth that the Sassoon people were killed because they were rebels: all those who refused to sign this document (and their number was considerable) were thrown into prison. Finally, in order to obtain their release, many consented to append their signatures in order to avoid further persecution. This document was transmitted by the Vali to Constantinople. The situation in the province is at present such that the peasants are unable to till their lands without having their oxen and seed taken away from them by the Kurds.

Asked whether the Armenians who may be called by the Commission of Inquiry would tell the truth without fear, my informant said he had not the slightest doubt they would, and added that anything, even death, would be preferable to the present intolerable state of things.

No. 41.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 24.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 10, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 413 of the 7th September last, I have the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond on the alleged ill-treatment of Armenians now imprisoned at Karahissar.

I had already drawn the attention of the Grand Vizier to the case, and was informed by him that the number of prisoners did not exceed thirty-eight.

I have now intimated to His Highness that the further particulars which have reached me show that the number of prisoners is much higher than thirty-eight, and includes the most respectable Armenians of Karahissar; that they are being kept in prison without any definite charge and exposed to very severe treatment, whilst commerce, agriculture, and public instruction are entirely suspended.

I urged that steps should be taken to obtain independent information as to the conduct of the authorities mentioned by Mr. Longworth, who seem to be grossly abusing the power intrusted to them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 41.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Trebizond, December 29, 1894.

Sir,

IN connection with my despatches of the 26th July, 25th August, and 3rd September, and their inclosures, reporting the slaughter of six Armenian prisoners at Karahissar, I would beg leave to transmit herewith copy of an unsigned letter addressed to this Consulate in the name of the Armenian inhabitants of that town of the Sivas Vilayet.

Your Excellency will gather from this communication that there seem to be some eighty Armenians in the prisons of that district, alleged to be grossly tortured by the Karahissar Mutessarif, Mustafa Bey, his son-in-law, the Sou Shehir Kaïmakam, Djevad Bey, and the Mayor of Karahissar, Sabit Bey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 41.

The Armenian Population of Shabin-Karahissar to Consul Longworth.

Le 26 Novembre (8 Décembre), 1894.

Monsieur,

NOUS aimons à vous présenter les souffrances sous le poids desquelles souffre amèrement la communauté Arménienne d'une ville, à vous qui êtes le représentant d'une nation grande par sa civilisation et son humanité.

Vous connaissez bien la situation critique des Arméniens de Shabin-Karahissar;

elle devient insupportable, depuis que les six prisonniers Arméniens ont été massacrés il y a environ cinq mois.

Le Gouvernement semble avoir vu que la terreur inspirée par le susdit massacre cruel n'est pas suffisante, a commencé de prendre des mesures très sévères qui ont conduit l'élément Chrétien à une ruine sûre et graduelle.

Nous voulons vous présenter cette situation, qu'on peut justement nommer innomable.

Les autorités locales, et particulièrement le Mutessarif, Mustafa Bey, désireux d'obtenir des dignités et décorations, ont supposé que des révolutionnaires Arméniens existent dans cette ville.

Le Mutessarif et ses partisans (Sabit Effendi, Chef de la Municipalité, Djévad Bey, beau-fils du Mutessarif et Caïmacam de Sou Shéhir) ont dès lors abandonné tous les intérêts de l'État, et poursuivent les Arméniens, en employant des moyens brutaux, pour arriver à leur dessein.

Dès lors tous les moyens de communication ont été coupés. On refuse à donner des passeports à toutes les classes, et par ce moyen toute possibilité de faire part de l'état des choses est coupée.

On a essayé d'arrêter presque toutes les personnes de la ville ou des alentours; des recherches immédiates et des emprisonnements sont des cas ordinaires à présent pour nous.

Les prisonniers ont été d'abord menés au centre de Sou Shéhir, à Andreas, où ils ont été exposés, sous la surveillance de Djévad Bey, à des supplices les plus sévères dont on se servait pendant l'Inquisition, et qu'on ne voudrait pas décrire.

Ce sont plutôt les trois classes de notre ville (la personne instruite, la jeunesse, et le marchand ou le capitaliste) qui sont exposées à la sévérité des poursuites. Refuser de la nourriture, donner des coups de cravache, torturer le corps avec des tenailles, le torturer sur bois en forme de croix, ou verser de l'eau chaude sur le corps, tordre les membres génériques, entraver la respiration, violer les jeunes gens, &c. Voici à quelles tortures brutales sont exposés les prisonniers!

Les Gouvernements Chrétiens qui ont de la force physique et morale, pourront envoyer officiellement ou en secret des inspecteurs pour constater cet état de choses.

La prison centrale du Gouvernement est pleine de prisonniers de cette sorte que viennent visiter souvent de nouveaux prisonniers; on les compte à présent quatre-vingts à peu près. Ça été le résultat d'avoir présenté notre situation critique, il y a cinq à six mois, aux Consuls étrangers qui ont bien voulu prendre notre Pétition en considération, dont nous sommes toujours reconnaissants.

Ces prisonniers peuvent cependant être licenciés, lorsqu'ils se décident à payer aux autorités L. T. 200 à L. T. 300 chacun; un fait qui prouve parfaitement leur innocence.

On ne pense plus au commerce, à l'agriculture et à l'instruction (d'ailleurs les écoles sont fermées déjà) qui sont assurément les vrais intérêts de l'État; il n'y a point de sûreté pour l'honneur, les biens, et la vie.

Ainsi lorsqu'on a séparé et emprisonné les bons éléments d'une ville par des moyens déloyaux et injustes, il est facile à comprendre que le reste ne pourra jamais se défendre dans une telle situation critique, et trouble déjà à la probabilité d'une invasion immédiate. Les Turcs, encouragés par la conduite du Gouvernement, ont renouvelé leur ancien zèle d'Islamisme, et se préparent à faire une invasion sur une communauté qui est dépourvue de tous les moyens de protection; et le Gouvernement se sent incapable, de gré ou de force, d'empêcher cette invasion barbare dont on peut craindre les résultats.

Ce sera long et pénible de décrire notre triste situation: Depuis longtemps on a perdu la tranquillité de corps et d'esprit, ainsi que le contentement intérieur que sentent les familles honnêtes en voyant autour d'elles leurs enfants et leurs amis; il n'y a personne qui n'ait pas en prison son fils, ou son père, ou bien son frère qui demandent du secours, et que l'on ne peut pas secourir cependant. C'est affreux!

Vous pouvez donc nous secourir, vous qui représentez la Reine de la Grande-Bretagne (Vive la Reine Victoria!) qui fera respecter assurément le droit et la justice!

Lorsqu'il y a de bonnes et nobles personnes qui représentent les Gouvernements Chrétiens, nous ne désespérons jamais. Nous venons donc encore une fois vous demander vivement, au nom de l'humanité et de la justice, d'avoir pitié de nous en nous délivrant de cette situation insupportable!

On nous dit: "Il vous faut même mourir sous le ssupplices sans faire part aux

Puissances étrangères de votre état." Et l'on nous fait souffrir plus qu'à l'ordinaire lorsque nous vous crions: "Au secours! au secours!"

En tout cas, dans l'espoir que notre présente supplique sera prise en bonne considération en haut lieu, nous restons à jamais reconnaissants.

(Signé) La Population Arménienne de Shabin Karahissar.

No. 42.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 25.)

Constantinople, January 10, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose translation of an extract from the Turkish newspaper, referring to acts of arson and brigandage committed by disaffected Armenians.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 42.

Extract from the "Tarik" of January 6, 1895.

(Translation.)

FOR some time back accounts have appeared in the press, as they occurred, of acts of arson, highway brigandage, murder and robbery committed by disaffected Armenians; but as it is well known that loyal Armenians, who, during some 600 years have experienced the clemency and justice of the Ottoman Government, are very much affected and grieved by these crimes, and not only do not countenance the promoters of sedition who dare to engage in such acts, but on the contrary express their horror and disgust at them, it is not thought necessary to enter into further details.

N.B.—The above has appeared in all the Turkish papers of the 6th January, and is evidently of an inspired, if not an official, character.

No. 43.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 26.)

Constantinople, January 10, 1895.

My Lord,

THE following is a list of the Turkish Commissioners now on their way to inquire into the Armenian disturbances:—

1. Shefik Bey.
2. Jellal-ed-din Bey.
3. Emner Bey.
4. Tewfik Pasha (rank of Ferik).

Mejid Effendi, Secretary.

The first three Commissioners rank above Hassan Talsin Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, who is a "Roumeili Beylerbey," which corresponds to the rank of Ferik.

Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond informs me that Kadri Bey, the Vali of that place, states that for years he has been intimately acquainted with Jellal-ed-din Bey and Shefik Bey, and testifies to their being men of great integrity and some capacity.

Abdullah Pasha, who was formerly a member of the Ottoman Commission, is now returning to Constantinople. He has left Trebizond and will stop at Samsoon on his way to inquire into a dispute between the Civil and Military Governors of that place.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 44.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 27.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 10, 1895.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 269 of the 31st December last, and other correspondence respecting Mr. Behesnelian, I have the honour to report that in consequence of my representations the Sublime Porte telegraphed to the Vali of Adana on the 29th ultimo, asking for explanations. The reply was vague and unsatisfactory, merely stating that Mr. Behesnelian was under suspicion. At my request the Sublime Porte telegraphed again to the Vali, but with little result, as in his second reply he still refused to give details, and stated that he had found it necessary to detain Mr. Behesnelian at Marash, and was forwarding to the Grand Vizier by this week's post the documents concerning the case.

I shall continue to press for a definite answer, and will inform your Lordship as soon as I receive it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 45.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 28. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Pera, January 10, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a translation of a letter which has been addressed to me by the Armenian Hunchakian Committee in regard to the alleged maladministration in the Mutessariflik of Amassia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 45.

The Armenian Hutchaquian Committee to Sir P. Currie.

(Traduction de l'Arménien.)
Excellence, *Amassia, November 16 (28), 1894.*

A L'OCCASION de l'arrivée dans ces parages du Conseil de Guerre, un Mémoire a été soumis à la Présidence de ce Conseil de la part du peuple Arménien. Nous envoyons ci-joint à votre Excellence la traduction Arménienne de ce document en votre qualité de Représentant d'une des Grandes Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin.

Le Conseil Administratif de la Succursale d'Amassia
du Comité Hutchaquian,
(L.S.)

Inclosure 2 in No. 45.

Mémorial.

(Traduction de l'Arménien.)
A la Présidence du Conseil de Guerre :
Excellence,

VOUS avez exécuté l'ordre du Sultan de gracier les sujets Arméniens emprisonnés pour des questions politiques dans la partie Asiatique de l'Empire Ottoman. Mais vous n'avez pas bien voulu examiner quels étaient les vrais motifs dont sont résultées ces questions politiques ou en d'autres termes, la révolution.

Vous auriez donné parfaitement raison, vous-même, à ces mouvements, si vous aviez examiné sous-main les agissements des Aghas Turcs et des fonctionnaires du Gouvernement contre la population Musulmane et non-Musulmane qui habitent

l'Anatolie, car, alors, vous vous seriez parfaitement informés sur les causes de la révolution.

Nous nous permettons de vous raconter brièvement des faits contraires à tout sentiment de justice et d'humanité, qui se produisent journellement dans nos contrées, parce que nous avons confiance dans l'amour de justice et dans les sentiments d'humanité de votre Excellence.

D'après tout ce que nous voyons et nous entendons, nous constatons, avant tout, qu'il n'existe point de notions d'équité et de justice parmi les fonctionnaires du Gouvernement, et que la corruption et la vénalité existent parmi ces fonctionnaires, depuis les plus hauts placés jusqu'au dernier des gendarmes. Il en résulte que devant l'autorité le juste est toujours injuste, et l'injuste est toujours juste. Devant les Tribunaux l'autorité ne respecte jamais l'égalité entre le Chrétien et le Musulman. Un Arménien ou un Turc pauvre, pourvu que son adversaire soit un Turc riche, est sûr de perdre sa cause, même lorsqu'il est dans son droit. Dans ces deux ou trois dernières années tout plaignant qui s'adresse au Gouvernement pour protester contre l'injustice commise est infailliblement qualifié de révolutionnaire ; on l'arrête, on l'interroge, on le met dans la prison, on le prive de toute relation avec le monde, et les malheureux, désespérant de poursuivre son procès, s'en désiste en donnant quelques livres Turques de "bakchiche," afin de recouvrer sa liberté.

Depuis trois ou quatre ans on peut dire que c'est un grand marché de bénéfice qui est ouvert aux fonctionnaires du Gouvernement et à leurs amis et protégés. Aucun Arménien n'ose demander sa créance sur un Turc, car celui qui a osé le faire s'est vu emprisonné le lendemain. Et ceci se passe non seulement dans les villes, mais aussi dans les villages, où des instructions secrètes sont données par le Gouvernement aux débiteurs Musulmans de ne jamais payer leurs dettes aux Arméniens ; et c'est pour cela que le commerce a presque complètement cessé, et que la population arriva à une misère extrême. Quel profit il y a dans tout cela pour le Gouvernement Impérial ? Et qui pourra dire, en pareilles circonstances, que les Arméniens sont les révolutionnaires ou les fautifs, et non pas le Gouvernment lui-même ?

Entrez une fois dans les prisons et examinez l'état des prisonniers. Un grand nombre parmi eux y est incarcéré depuis trois ou quatre ans, à tort ou à raison, sans qu'il ait été jugé. En vain ils adressent des requêtes ou donnent de l'argent, et finalement, après beaucoup d'efforts, ils parviennent à obtenir leur jugement, consistant dans leur punition ou leur liberté. Nous avons vu un de ces malheureux Arméniens emprisonné pendant trente-quatre mois, et ce n'est qu'après ce long laps de temps qu'il a été jugé et reconnu innocent.

Un autre Arménien a été retenu pendant cinq ans dans la prison sous l'accusation d'avoir assassiné quelqu'un, alors que ce *quelqu'un* était parfaitement vivant, ce que la mère de ce soi-disant assassin est parvenue à prouver au Tribunal en montrant la personne qui a été indiquée comme victime du meurtre. Malgré cette preuve de la femme, le Tribunal a gardé l'Arménien dans la prison, en prétendant qu'il ne pouvait pas revenir sur son jugement.

Un autre Arménien accusé d'avoir commis un crime a été préventivement emprisonné pendant vingt-quatre mois, et ce n'est qu'ensuite qu'il a été jugé et condamné à une année de prison.

Enfin, un autre Arménien, après avoir resté dix-huit mois en prison, a été ensuite condamné à six mois d'emprisonnement.

Laissant de côté la corruption des percepteurs des impôts, et les exactions et les actes de violence que ces derniers exercent sur les villageois.

Personne ne se soucie de l'état des prisons, de leur saleté, des actes de barbarie qui s'y commettent, et où les honnêtes gens sont confondus avec les individus les plus malhonnêtes et impliqués dans des actes de crime.

Outre, qu'on augmente les impôts d'une année à l'autre, on cherche à former toutes les sources de bénéfice, comme aussi à créer chaque jour de nouveaux impôts. On réclame sur une propriété ne valant que 5,000 piastres des impôts qui se perçoivent sur une propriété de 10,000 piastres. On exige d'un individu, qui ne gagne pas même 1,000 piastres par an, une taxe de "temettez" de 3,000 ou 4,000 piastres. Tel pauvre qui a deux, trois, quatre, et cinq enfants mâles, incapables encore de gagner leur vie, est obligé de payer 2 medjidiés par tête pour eux. Quelle est la loi qui autorise ? Et quelle est la conscience qui permet qu'on réclame l'impôt d'exonération militaire sur des enfants de 1, 2, 3 jusqu'à 13 ans ? Ces mêmes enfants sont également inscrits pour le paiement de 12 piastres par an et par tête pour subvenir aux frais de constructions de chaussées.

On perçoit des taxes exorbitantes et dépassant toutes les limites imaginables pour

le transfert ("tutihal") d'une maison, d'une boutique, d'un jardin, ou d'un champ. On réclame d'une vigne qui n'a, par exemple, qu'une valeur de 2,000 piastres, des taxes d'une propriété de 4,000 ou 5,000 piastres à titre d'impôt foncier et que la vigne ait produit ou non, on exige des dîmes. Tel jardin ou telle vigne qui ne donne des récoltes que pour 1,000 piastres, on réclame au moins 120 ou 150 piastres de dîmes; en vain le propriétaire crie, proteste, il est obligé de payer, s'il ne veut pas être jeté dans la prison. Il n'y a aucune exagération dans ce que nous avançons [*sic*] peut le prouver. Indépendamment de ces taxes multiples, on vous prend aussi des taxes sur votre vin et sur votre eau-de-vie pour votre consommation personnelle, et si vous en vendez vous êtes tenu de payer aussi une taxe pour la vente, et de plus vous êtes obligé de payer une taxe supplémentaire pour le tourteau de l'eau-de-vie et du vin de votre consommation.

Déjà les cocons de vers à soie se vendent à la Douane aux enchères et le vendeur paye alors 12½ pour cent de droit de douane, mais cela n'empêche pas que l'acheteur soit tout de même obligé de payer une taxe d'enregistrement. Le cultivateur s'endette, parvient à se procurer des semences et sème sur plusieurs champs. Or, le percepteur des impôts exige la dîme non seulement pour la récolte mais aussi pour les semences.

La taxe sur les moutons est de 3 piastres par tête et se perçoit avant le mois de Mars. Si le propriétaire d'un troupeau de vingt moutons en a perdu quelques-uns, même jusqu'à dix têtes, il doit quand même payer pour vingt.

Les paysans, indépendamment des taxes et impôts très élevés qu'ils payent comme dîme pour leurs blés, pour leurs autres produits, pour leurs bestiaux, &c., sont obligés de payer aussi un impôt sur leurs bénéfices réels ou supposés. On veut ainsi qu'ils soient entièrement écrasés sous le poids de leurs dettes. Enfin le Gouvernement ne fait que spolier la population dans toutes occasions, et si cet état de choses continue, nous ne croyons pas que le calme et la tranquillité puissent régner ici.

Après avoir obtenu leur grâce de Sa Majesté Impériale plusieurs des détenus qui étaient emprisonnés depuis huit ou onze mois et qui avaient tant et tant souffert avec leurs familles, ont encore eu le malheur d'être invités, sous des menaces par son Excellence le Mutessarif de cette localité, en présence des fonctionnaires judiciaires, à abandonner Amassia et à aller habiter d'autres localités. Or ces malheureux n'ayant pas des facilités pécuniaires et en raison de l'intempérie de la saison, ne pouvant pas se déplacer avec leur famille, ont supplié son Excellence de les laisser dans leur pays; mais le Mutessarif ne veut pas les entendre et leur ordonne sévèrement de partir à une époque fixée, en disant: "Je n'ai pas à me mêler de vos moyens d'existence."

Ces malheureux n'avaient pas eu le temps de ce réjouir de la grâce accordée par le Souverain, qu'une situation bien triste a commencé pour eux. Quelle loi, quelle justice, et quelle conscience que celles des fonctionnaires d'ici? Avec tout cela, il est évident pour nous que des actes pareils commis par le Gouvernement aussi illégalement sont contraires à la volonté de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan et de votre Excellence, et que les actes de barbarie commis depuis trois ou quatre ans par deux ou trois fonctionnaires qui nous ont pris dans leurs griffes, sont inconnus de Sa Majesté et de votre Excellence.

Ces fonctionnaires agissent selon leurs intérêts en favorisant les uns et en écrasant les autres. Ils ont été furieux lorsqu'ils ont appris la grâce accordée par le Souverain, parce que ces emprisonnements politiques étaient une grande source de revenus pour eux.

Je vous donnerai le récit d'un fait tout récent. Un avocat Arménien de Yuzgat (du village de Hadji-Kony) et qui était emprisonné ici, aussitôt après sa mise en liberté s'est vu empoigné par Saraf Abdoullah Effendi, qui le menace de le faire jeter de nouveau dans les cachots s'il ne lui donne pas de suite £T. 10. L'avocat se procure n'importe comment £T. 5 et conserve sa liberté. Ce fait s'est produit le jour même du départ de votre Excellence pour Marsovan.

Peut-on espérer une réalisation quelconque de réformes, lorsque de pareils gens sont en état d'employer des influences pareilles dans les affaires de l'Administration.

(Signé) La population Arménienne.

No. 46.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

(No. 29.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 10, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum reporting an outbreak of cholera at Moush. Mr. Graves adds that this is probably a ruse of the Vali of Bitlis to hamper the movements of the European Delegates, and that the Vali has already established various quarantine cordons on his own responsibility.

I have also the honour to inclose translation of a Notice which appeared in the Turkish newspaper, notifying that, as no further cases of the epidemic had appeared, the quarantine had been abolished.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 46.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 26, 1894.

AS I had the honour to report to your Excellency by telegraph on the 24th instant, a telegram was received here on that date from the Vali of Bitlis to the Vali of Erzeroum, with copy to the Sanitary Inspector, stating in somewhat vague terms that cholera had broken out afresh at Moush; that the surrounding districts had been contaminated by fugitives; and requesting that quarantine cordons might be established upon all the roads leading to Bitlis. This information was at once communicated by the Sanitary Inspector to the Board of Health at Constantinople, with a request for instructions.

Cholera had entirely disappeared from the Moush district for nearly a month, and its reappearance at midwinter seems, to say the least of it, surprising, and is generally discredited here. I did not hesitate to inform your Excellency that I suspect that this is merely a fresh manœuvre of Tahsin Pasha for the purpose of delaying inquiry into his conduct, and of hampering the movements of the European Delegates, as he did in the case of Mr. Hallward.

I have since been informed that the Vali of Bitlis has already established various quarantine cordons on his own responsibility, without awaiting the consent of the Board of Health.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 46.

Extract from the "Tarik" of December 26, 1894.

(Translation.)

Telegram from the Vali of Bitlis to the Minister of the Interior, dated December 12 (24), 1894.

SINCE the last cases reported fifteen days ago there have, fortunately, been neither new cases nor deaths from cholera either in the town of Moush or in the villages in the Moush plain. Upon receipt of this intelligence the lazarettos established for arrivals from Moush were abolished.

No. 47.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

(No. 4.)

My Lord, *The Hague, January* 11, 1895.

M. ROËLL incidentally referred yesterday to the Armenian question, which, according to advices he had just received from Constantinople, had produced the greatest irritation in the Sultan's mind.

His Excellency observed that he had been seriously pressed by Count Frederick de Bylandt, Member for Apeldoorn in the Second Chamber, to join the other Powers in the steps that had been taken at Constantinople in this question. Count Bylandt had represented to him that Holland, as a considerable Mussulman Power, and as having quite recently shown its tolerance and even-handed justice by coming to the assistance of the oppressed Mussulmans in Lombok, might well claim to have a voice in this matter. He (M. Roëll) did not, however, see that there was any call for this Government to mix themselves up in a business which did not concern them. He was reminded of the ill-judged remonstrances addressed by one of his predecessors in office, at the instigation of France, to the Russian Government on the rigour shown in the suppression of the Polish insurrection in 1863.

M. van der Maesen de Sombreff, although a member of the powerful Thorbecke Administration, had fallen on this question, the Chamber holding that the Netherlands should avoid indulging in "la grande politique," an opinion in which he (M. Roëll) fully concurred.

Count F. de Bylandt, who is a most amiable man, and whom I had the pleasure of having for a colleague some years ago in Sweden, is an influential member of the Orthodox Calvinist party, and looks at questions of foreign policy from what might be termed the Exeter Hall point of view.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 48.

Archpriest Khoran, Chumla, to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(Télégraphique.) *Chumla, le 13 Janvier*, 1895.

"L'ARMÉNIE:" "Dames Arméniennes émues du massacre Sassoun et de la plaine Moucie par les Turcs ont tenu aujourd'hui meeting, et m'ont chargé vous prier respectueusement de soumettre aux pieds du Trône de Sa Majesté la Reine les douleurs et implorer sa clémence et sa haute protection en faveur de leurs malheureuses sœurs victimes des vexations inouïes qui se commettent journellement."

No. 49.

Colonel Robinson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 15.)

My Lord, 1, *Whitehall Gardens, London, January* 14, 1895.

I BEG to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 4th instant, and venture to inclose copies of two letters which I have had made, thinking they may possibly be of use in connection with the investigations now going on.

No. 1 is from the wife of Mr. Behesnilian, dated Tarsus, 10th December, 1894, and covered by a few lines from Dr. Christie, who is the Head of St. Paul's Institute (American).

No. 2 is from Mr. Behesnilian, dated Marash, 13th December, 1894, from which it is evident that inquiries were being made about his case by the authorities.

From the observations of Dr. Christie and Mr. Behesnilian, it seems to us that to stamp out Christian work is the object of the Turks, and the cause of the persecution in the case of Mr. Behesnilian and those working at Tarsus and neighbourhood.

Thanking you again for the assistance rendered, and trusting that the efforts for Mr. Behesnilian's release may not be relaxed, I have, &c.

(Signed) W. ROBINSON, *Colonel*,
Acting Chairman, Tarsus Bible Mission.

Inclosure 1 in No. 49.

Mrs. Behesnilian and Dr. Christie to Mr. Scott.

Dear Sir, *Tarsus, December* 10, 1894.

I RECEIVED your letter of the 27th November to-day. I am very grateful for your great sympathy towards me. It came to me like the sunlight among the dark clouds, for I was almost hopeless. I am very thankful to the Christian friends who pray for me, and much obliged to you and all those friends who had a share in giving the 20*l.* when you understood how much we were in debt on account of our present trial; the money was most welcome to us. Dr. Christie advises me to let Garabed Salibyan, of Marash, receive the draft. He is my father, and can easily attend to the matter, and I will do this.

Mr. Behesnilian is now, we suppose, in Marash; we hear he is not in prison, but that he cannot go anywhere outside his city. I heard yesterday that a telegram had come ordering that he be sent back to Tarsus; telegrams were sent yesterday inquiring about him; we cannot learn certainly where he is; when I hear any further news of his whereabouts I will write to you as soon as possible.

Please give my special thanks and salaams to Colonel Robinson, Mr. Hooper, and those dear Christian friends who pray for us. I have found much comfort in your letter. I thank God we have such friends trying to help us.

Dr. Christie advises me not to have papers sent to us containing articles about this persecution, because our mail is examined at the post-office sometimes. I am sending this to Mersine, to be mailed by French post.

Please send letters to me through Dr. Christie's hands.

May God reward you for all your kindness to me and my husband.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) SENIA BEHESNILIAN.

Many thanks from Mrs. Christie, and myself also. We are in great trouble here because of the attacks of the Government. Another teacher in our school was arrested on the 9th December and taken to Adana. I protested in vain. There is a set purpose to overthrow all the work of the Gospel in these regions. Our trust is in God, who will bring all things out right in the end.

If your friends can help us in any way we shall be most grateful.

It is the "Reign of Terror" over again.

Hastily but truly yours,
(Signed) THOMAS D. CHRISTIE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 49.

Mr. Behesnilian to Mr. Scott.

My dear Sir, *Marash (viâ Alexandretta), December* 13, 1894.

WILL you allow me to make you acquainted with the sad condition in which I have been found for the last three months? At the outset let me state very briefly a few facts respecting my mission which I have been carrying on in connection with Evangelical Churches, Young Men's Christian Association, and the Lord's Day School in Marash.

Taken as a whole, I have taken nearly 400 services in Marash in about two years. On the Lord's Day I often took three services. The mornings I superintended over the Lord's Day Schools, at noons I took Bible-classes for young and grown people, and evenings I preached.

On week days I visited houses, and urged on families to study the Bible with their own households. I also distributed Bibles granted by friends in London to those who could not afford to purchase. My wife, a graduate of Girls' College in Marash, has been a co-worker to me in carrying on my mission. She has done her utmost for the welfare of her fellow-women in this city. I believe God has blessed our efforts to the salvation of many souls. I also visited several villages near Marash, and the Lord blessed my mission in those places too.

You are aware that I was ordained to carry on my mission in Cilicia, but much

regret that have been unable to do so. Since my arrival in Marash I did my utmost to get a passport to enable me to take missionary tours through Cilicia, but the Turkish Government did not give it to me, and I was not allowed to go out of Marash. But I am glad to inform you that, through the instrumentality of the British Government, about six months ago I got a passport from the Turkish Government in Marash. After I got the passport, I went to Tarsus, and saw Dr. Christie, President of St. Paul's Institute there, and made an arrangement with him to carry on my mission in connection with his Institute. Till now I have made you acquainted with the bright side of my work, but the following facts, I am sure, will make you very sad.

Having the passport in my hand, I, with my family, was going to Tarsus about three months ago. During the journey I and four students of Marash, who were going with me to Tarsus to study in the St. Paul's Institute there, were arrested by the Government in Osmania, and were sent to the Government in Adana, under the care of soldiers. The Turkish authorities in Adana put me and the students in prison, and we were in gaol about forty days.

The sad condition in which we were found in prison is impossible to describe. The poor students had sometimes nothing to eat but bread. Our books and written papers, which were seized too, were examined by the authorities in Adana, and they could find nothing against the Turkish Government. But Vali (Governor-General in Adana), who has prejudice against the St. Paul's Institute, and who dislikes Protestant Christianity, did not allow me and the students to go to Tarsus.

Dr. Christie, President of the Institute, and I did our utmost to get permission from Vali to go to Tarsus, but in vain. The Vali took no notice of our petitions. After we were in prison about forty days, when we were informed that the Vali had given a command that I and the students should be driven back to Marash, the students, who were very desirous to go to Tarsus to study there, so cried that the Governor of the prison, a Mahommedan gentleman, sympathized with us, and besought the Vali to set us free, but the latter took no notice of him. I wrote a Petition to the Vali to allow me to go to Tarsus and see my wife there, but no answer was given. Early in the morning he drove me and the students back to Marash under the care of soldiers. My poor wife had heard that I should be driven back to Marash; notwithstanding the dangers of the journey she had come to Adana during the night to see me, but she was disappointed, as we were compelled to leave Adana so early. It can be imagined how sad she felt then. The journey that she had taken during the night, and her leaving the baby in Tarsus, made me very sad indeed. The students had no money to hire mules. They travelled about three hours on foot, but were so tired that they could not walk. A Protestant brother who saw us in that sad condition had sent a carriage for us. We had only bread to eat on the journey. The authorities did not allow us to get food enough. When we were leaving Adana, if I had not met a Protestant brother, and had not borrowed a little money from him, I and the students would be starved. One of the students was so tired that he could not walk, and when he told that he could not go fast the soldiers forced him to go fast, and they told that they would not mind if he had died on the journey.

It took us about six days to come back to Marash. Until we arrived in this city we were put in prison every night during the journey. We arrived in Marash on Sunday morning. If I had not given a little "bakhshish" to the soldiers who brought us they would not allow to take the journey Saturday night, and we had to take journey Sunday. I and the students are exiles in Marash now, and the Government in this city does not permit us to go elsewhere. I have written Colonel Wellesley Robinson, C.B., Chairman of my Committee in London, who, about six months ago, made the British Government willing to enable me to get the passport, and wished him to do his utmost to get a permission from the Government in Constantinople, through the British Embassy there, which will enable me and the students to go to Tarsus. According to the desire of my Committee in London, I had to attach myself to the St. Paul's Institute, but I am utterly disappointed. My wife is in Tarsus now. You can imagine how lonely she will feel in that strange city. It is very hard for her and the baby to come back to Marash, as it takes about six days' journey, and as it is winter now. A letter was received from Tarsus informing us that the house there in which my wife lives now was searched by policemen, and they had found several letters of consolation sent by her parents and mine from Marash, and they were taken by the policemen to the Government in Adana.

On receiving the sad news I was altogether cast down, as my wife is much afraid

since the house was searched by policemen, and as I cannot afford to support her there. I sent a man to bring her back to Marash. I do not know what will happen to her and the baby on the journey. The Government in this city does not permit me to go and meet my wife. Both in prison and to go to Adana and come back to Marash I spent about 25*l.* I have borrowed about 15*l.* from others, and do not know how to pay it; as I cannot live without food I borrow money for my support too. I hope you will very kindly pardon me for telling you everything plainly; I am grateful to you for your goodness to me. In this time of my great want, perplexity, and exilement I need the prayer, sympathy, and practical assistance of good people everywhere. I am grateful to friends in London for the help they kindly sent, but I am very sorry to say the money which I received from friends, through my Committee, was very little, and it was scarcely enough for my support. The Committee could not send what they promised to send.

If I had attached myself to the St. Paul's Institute in Tarsus I would receive a little salary from the Institute, and also a little help from friends in London, and I could support my family then. I shall be exceedingly gratified if you can see your way to sympathize with me in this time of my great want.

If you can get any practical assistance from your friends and very kindly send it to Charles Perrott, Esq., Honorary Secretary of my Mission, 59, Strand, London, W.C., he will remit it to me.

Wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and trusting you will remember me and my wife in your prayer, I am, &c.

(Signed) KRIKOR BEHESNILIAN.

P.S.—You may acquaint your friends concerning the facts stated in this letter if you wish to do so, but please do not insert the facts respecting the Turkish Government in any paper in England, and if you wish to send a letter to me, please write my name and address on an envelope and inclose it in another envelope and send it to the following address:—

"To the American
Mr. Lee,
Marash, vih Alexandretta,
Asia Minor."

The work of God is very much hindered lately in Cilicia. In Osmania, where we were arrested, Protestant school was closed a few weeks ago, and the teacher was driven back to his native city. In the same village Protestant church was closed too. This is the time to do what you can on behalf of God's work.

There is quarantine between Tarsus and Marash. So my wife cannot come to Marash. After two weeks she cannot come at all, for the winter will be very severe then. I do not know what to do.

The British Consul in Aleppo has seen the Vali there on my behalf, but I do not know whether the Vali will enable me to go to Tarsus. I hope he will, but it is not certain yet.

K. B.

No. 50.

The National Moslem Association to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 15.)

My Lord, 21, *Sinclair Road, Kensington, W., January* 14, 1895.

IN pursuance of a Resolution unanimously passed at a General Meeting of the Moslems resident in Great Britain, held in London on the 21st December, 1894, we, the Undersigned, on behalf of "Anjumani Islam" (National Moslem Association), representing Moslems throughout the world, and in India particularly, would respectfully draw the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the dangerous nature of the agitation that is now carried on in this country against the Ottoman Empire. The manner in which Mahommedan law and religion are being misrepresented, and the Mahommedan character is being traduced, in speeches from platform and from pulpit, as well as in the press, has created the greatest indignation among followers of the Prophet.

We feel that cruel injustice is being done to the Sovereign of Turkey, who is the

Caliph of Islam, as well as an old and faithful ally of the British Empire, by the readiness with which the alleged atrocities in Armenia are assumed to be true, and the charges against Turkey are prejudged. Whilst sharing in the detestation that crimes against humanity naturally call forth, we venture to suggest that most of these statements, in our opinion, show strong evidence of gross exaggeration and falsehood; no allowance whatever being made for the difficulties incident to the maintenance of order in wild border districts.

Sixty million Moslems are loyal subjects of Her Majesty, and the interests of millions of others are closely bound up with the interests of Great Britain. We, therefore, deplore the religious intolerance that has been imported into a purely political question. Intolerance in such a matter is likely to arouse animosity between Moslem and Christian, and nothing could be more disastrous.

In the interests of our Moslem brethren in Turkey, we would recall to the memory of Her Majesty's Government the terrible sufferings and wrongs inflicted upon Mahommedans during the last attack of Russia upon the Ottoman Empire. Then the non-combatant Mussulman population of the Balkan Peninsula was, by deliberate massacres and wholesale outrage, in which Mahommedan women and children were treated with the utmost barbarity, practically annihilated.

We most strongly protest against any step being taken to encourage an occupation of Turkish territory by Russia on any pretext whatever.

In the name of the many millions of Moslems, who cannot make their voices heard in this country as their opponents have contrived to do, we beg to appeal to the Government of the Queen-Empress to see that until the facts of the case are placed before the Cabinet no injustice be done to the Ottoman Government and the Ottoman people.

We have, &c.
(Signed) MOHAMMAD IRADATULLAH,
SYED SHARFUDDIN AHMAD,
Honorary Secretaries.

No. 51.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 15.)

(No. 13.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 15, 1895, 8 P.M.*

IN accordance with the instructions of the Sultan, Abdullah Pasha, ex-President of the Sassoon Commission, who has just arrived here from Moush, paid me a visit to-day, accompanied by Munir Bey, one of His Majesty's Secretaries.

He said that, in his opinion, the Commission would be able to arrive at the truth without any difficulty, though, on account of the snow, it would not be able to visit the Talori Valley before the middle or end of May.

He told me that two officers who were in command of the troops, and two village Moukhtars or Mayors, had given him account of the Sassoon occurrences.

According to their narrative, Tewfik Bey, at the head of six battalions, was sent, after the engagement which took place last July between the Behiranli Kurds and the Armenians, to subdue the latter, who, to the number of about 750, had taken up an intrenched position in the mountains, after having previously intrusted their families and flocks to the custody of the Sassoon Kurds.

A hundred and fifty Armenians were killed during the fight, which lasted four days, and the rest were dispersed.

The murdering of women and children and the destruction of the villages was absolutely denied.

I cross-questioned Abdullah Pasha on this point, and he professed his disbelief.

The women and children were, he said, in safety; but difficulties had been made by the Sassoon Kurds as to the restoration of the flocks.

Abdullah Pasha told me that he had had no communication with independent witnesses. He said that it was not until the fighting was over that Zeki Pasha had arrived at Sassoon.

No. 52.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 15.)

(No. 14.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 15, 1895, 7:30 P.M.*

I HAVE the honour to state, in reply to your Lordship's telegram No. 7, that Mr. Graves' reports from Erzeroum that twenty-one of the fifty prisoners at Armoudan have been sentenced to penal servitude for life, four have been acquitted, and the rest have received sentences varying from three to fifteen years. Devletian is not mentioned.

No. 53.

Sir A. Nicolson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 9.)
Sophia, January 13, 1895.

My Lord,

THE Macedonians in the capital have, since the meeting on which I reported in my despatch No. 153 of the 4th ultimo, remained quiet; but there have been lately several demonstrations in other parts of North Bulgaria in regard to the alleged misrule in the neighbouring Turkish vilayets. As a rule, the meetings have been held conjointly with the Armenian inhabitants, where such exist, but, so far as my information goes, the movement seems to have attracted little public attention.

I have received a despatch from Mr. Vice-Consul Wratislaw, informing me that the Macedonians intended to hold a meeting at Philippopoli on the 7th instant, but were given to understand by some Unionist leaders in that town that the meeting, if held, would be broken up by Government adherents. The project of holding a demonstration was consequently abandoned.

Mr. Wratislaw further states that the alleged grievances of the Macedonians do not appear to attract, to any considerable extent, the sympathy of the population in his district, which is, at the present time, too much absorbed with its own affairs to spare much pity for others. He has, however, noticed a certain jealousy of the attention which the Armenians are attracting in Europe; and he has been informed by politicians on the opposition side that they may eventually find it expedient to take up the Macedonian question as a convenient means of embarrassing the Government, but not till the spring. It is considered that the time has not yet arrived for serious agitation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

P.S.—I have sent a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople.

A. N.

No. 54.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 15.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 16, 1895, 7·15 P.M.*

TO-DAY I received a long visit from the new Armenian Patriarch, who gave me the impression of being a man of strong character and great earnestness. He was accompanied by his Secretary, who speaks English well, and has been at Oxford.

The Patriarch does not believe that the Armenians will dare to give evidence, or that the Commission will have much result.

All letters and telegrams from the provinces being stopped, he had no news, and the majority of the higher ecclesiastics have been imprisoned.

He expressed his gratitude, as well as that of the Armenians, for the support of Great Britain, but added, with great earnestness, that the condition of the Armenians would be far worse than ever if that support were withdrawn before the guarantees for a better state of things were obtained.

No. 55.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 26.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 16, 1895.

I APPROVE your Excellency's action in regard to the detention of Mr. Behesnilian at Marash, and your intention to press the Porte for a definite reply on the subject, as reported in your Excellency's despatch No. 27 of the 10th instant.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 56.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 27.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 16, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 24 of the 10th instant, inclosing further information, communicated by Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, with regard to the alleged harsh treatment of Armenians incarcerated at Kara-Hissar, and reporting your representations to the Porte on the subject.

I approve your Excellency's action in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 57.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 17.)

(No. 17. Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 17, 1895, 7·40 P.M.

IN returning the Armenian Patriarch's visit to-day I recommended him not to use any irritating language in regard to affairs in Armenia, and as long as the inquiry lasted to maintain an attitude of observation.

He promised to follow my suggestion.

I tendered this advice after he had shown me the draft of a letter which it was his intention to address to the Porte, to the effect that he was about to send a prelate to the Armenian provinces to replace those who had been imprisoned. Both the Treaty of Berlin and the Sassoon massacres were alluded to in the letter, and in language which could not fail to exasperate the Sultan greatly.

The Patriarch told me that he had called upon the Russian Ambassador yesterday, when the latter expressed himself as favourably disposed to reforms, but said that he must reserve his opinion in reply to the suggestion of the Patriarch that these reforms would require to be guaranteed by European Powers.

No. 58.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 17.)

(No. 18.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 17, 1895, 7·30 P.M.

ALL English newspaper correspondents desirous of travelling in Armenian provinces are being refused permission by the Turkish Government.

No. 59.

Foreign Office to National Moslem Association.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 17, 1895.

I AM directed by the Earl of Kimberley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, protesting, on behalf of the National Moslem Association,

against the anti-Mahommedan spirit which characterizes the agitation aroused in this country by the alleged ill-treatment of Armenians in Asiatic Turkey.

I am to point out, in reply, that Her Majesty's Government are not responsible for the views expressed by private individuals on this subject. The efforts of Her Majesty's Government have been directed in the first place to the institution of an impartial and searching inquiry as to the truth of the alleged massacres in the Sassoon district of Asia Minor. They are convinced that such an investigation is as necessary in the interests of the Turkish Government and of the Mahommedan as of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, and they are awaiting the result of the inquiry.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 60.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 18.)

(No. 19.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 18, 1895, 11·45 A.M.

LAST Saturday the Sultan accorded the new Armenian Patriarch an official reception, and when the latter spoke of the sufferings of the Armenians replied that it was the Patriarch's duty to reprove the misconduct of his seditious and insolent countrymen.

The audience did not extend over two minutes, and the Patriarch thereupon withdrew to the next room. As he was about to sit down and to take coffee, according to custom, the Sultan sent him a message, through Munir Pasha, that his presence was no longer required.

Throughout the audience he was treated with marked coldness, and the customary decoration was not conferred upon him.

No. 61.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 29.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 18, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram No. 17, Confidential, of yesterday, and approve the advice given by you to the Armenian Patriarch as reported therein.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 62.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 33. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 14, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora reporting the formation of Turkish Secret Defence Committees.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 62.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Angora, January* 10, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report that about three months ago I received information of the existence, in one or two towns of this vilayet, of Turkish Secret Defence Committees, but I refrained from communicating the matter to your Excellency until I had made further inquiries which show that my news was substantially correct.

The creation of these Committees has not been general, as I was at first given to understand, but is restricted to those parts of the vilayet affected by the recent Armenian revolutionary movement and—notwithstanding the feigned ignorance, in Turkish circles, of their existence—the fact that they are almost entirely composed of Government functionaries, confirms the supposition that they have been created under the auspices of the central authorities.

One list supplied to me includes the Agricultural Bank Director as President, with the Chief of Police, the head telegraph clerk, the "Hakim," the Deputy Procurator, and the clerks of the Census Department, and of the Court, as members.

With respect to the object of these Committees, one informant alleges that their plan is to simulate friendship towards Armenians, and to encourage them into acts of insubordination, so as to be able to implicate them in the doings of revolutionary agents and cause their ruin.

I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of this statement, but I am disinclined to believe that the above is the object of the associations in general though, in some places where race hatred has been revived by recent local events, their existence may be taken advantage of in the manner indicated.

Another informant assured me that the associated Turks intended seizing upon the first pretext to provoke an attack upon Armenians, and to create disturbances.

This did happen at Yuzgat last year, and would happen again there, or in any other place where unruly and mischievous Turks exist, but I do not think either that this is the main object of the Committees, though, on the other hand, the indiscriminate recognition of services rendered by officials in the suppression of disturbances, without a too minute investigation into the causes of such troubles, undoubtedly tends to encourage others to look forward to the acquisition of similar honours should the same opportunities present themselves.

My humble impression is that, owing to the exaggerated importance given by the Government to recent disturbances in these parts, and owing to the alarming reports circulated by professional agitators, the Turkish population here and there has been roused into a belief that, notwithstanding their numerical inferiority, a rising of Armenians is contemplated, and that it would be as well to be prepared for any eventuality. But, unless their fanaticism is excited to the necessary pitch by their superiors, it is not likely that they would spontaneously move against the Armenians, who are fellow-sufferers with them from a corrupt administration, which they themselves fear, but have no disposition to assist in any way that might, in their opinion, retard the betterment of their own position, which they reckon would follow any amelioration in the lot of their Christian neighbours.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 63.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 35.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 15, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit a translation of an extract from the Turkish newspaper, the "Tarik," respecting acts of brigandage alleged to have been committed by Armenians in the Vilayet of Bitlis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 63.

Extract from the "Tarik" of January 12, 1895.

(Translation.)

INFORMATION has been received from the Mushir of the 4th Corps d'Armée, and from the Vali of Bitlis, that a priest named Parsikh had been wounded by three Armenians disguised as Kurds, who attempted to murder him because he had given information about, and had thereby been the cause of, the seizure of seditious documents near an Armenian school at Moush; that a merchant named Baghos has had his money and goods robbed by five Armenians at Akhlat, and that an Armenian in

Kurdish disguise has been arrested near Moush. Their statements have been taken down by the police, and they themselves handed over to the judicial authorities.

We publish this, because the fact that Armenians were guilty of attempts on the life of their own priests proves to what degree they are ready to carry their acts of "brigandage."

No. 64.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 36.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 15, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship a translation of an extract from the Turkish newspaper, the "Tarik," commenting on a letter addressed to the "Times" by Admiral Sir E. Commerell respecting progress in the Ottoman dominions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 64.

Extract from the "Tarik" of January 12, 1895.

(Translation.)

WE noticed a letter of Admiral Commerell in the "Times," testifying to the progress made in the Ottoman dominions, and the degree of prosperity enjoyed by all classes without distinction.

A number of well-informed people, who have visited Turkey, have written to Admiral Commerell, congratulating him. The "Times," in one of its last numbers, prints one of these letters, expressing approval of the Admiral's statements, and regret at the incorrect information contained in some European papers.

No. 65.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 38.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 15, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatches No. 580 of the 16th ultimo, and No. 6 of the 1st instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the release of prisoners at Narman.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 65.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, January 3, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 16th ultimo, inclosing a Memorandum, herewith returned, received from Said Pasha in explanation of the case of the Narman prisoners.

The great majority of these prisoners have been already released, as reported in my despatch to your Excellency of the 20th December, and this fact alone seems a sufficient admission of the injustice of their three years' detention; indeed, none of the important assertions made by myself and my predecessors on this subject are really traversed in this curious document. The gravest of these are, that after the regular judicial authorities had failed, during a year and-a-half, to obtain any serious evidence against these prisoners, a court-martial in a single sitting, without any fresh evidence being produced, saw fit to condemn them to death, or long terms of penal servitude;

that the sentence of the court-martial was invalidated, but the prisoners were left for another year and a-half without trial; and that a large number of them have died in prison.

I am at a loss to understand the point of the explanation given in the last paragraph of the Memorandum, namely, that "if the affair has dragged on until now, it is because the son of Kolik, who is a Russian subject, had escaped to Russia, and could not be arrested, and that the other accused had not presented themselves in time."

Does this imply that if Kolik Oghlou was never captured, the prisoners, innocent or guilty, might be detained, without trial, for the term of their natural lives?

In conclusion, I would draw attention to the attempt to attenuate the importance of the release of the Mussulmans accused in the first instance of murdering Christians —by the plea that they were children—a somewhat elastic term, and one which would prove ridiculous enough if the "children" in question were produced; as well as to the disinclination to state the exact number of persons condemned to death and penal servitude, eight being given as sentenced to death, and "some others" to penal servitude. The figures furnished by me in my despatch of the 10th October, 1894, were twenty-three and thirty respectively, and to them I still adhere, as they were obtained from a copy of the sentence of the court-martial.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 66.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 21.)

(No. 39.) *Constantinople, January* 16, 1895.
My Lord,

THE Sassoon Commission, together with the British, Russian, and French Delegates, left Erzeroum for Moush on the 13th January.

I have the honour to inclose a Confidential Memorandum, of which I have received a copy privately from Mr. Graves, which he gave to Mr. Shipley for his guidance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Memorandum of Points to be elicited by Commission of Inquiry into Sassoon Occurrences.

IT would be my endeavour—

1. To show whether any massacre of prisoners, unarmed men, women, and children took place, and by whom it was committed, *i.e.*, by regular troops, or by Kurdish irregulars.

2. If such massacre took place, whether it was with the knowledge and consent of the Military Commanders on the spot, and of the local authorities, and who the said Commanders and authorities were.

3. If that was the case, whether such Commanders and local authorities were authorized so to act by superior orders from the Mushir Commanding-in-chief, or from the Central Government.

4. If such superior orders were given, whether the reports of local authorities or military officers, which led to their being given, were founded upon facts, i.e., whether it was demonstrated that the Sassoon Armenians were in armed rebellion against His Majesty the Sultan, or were merely acting in self-defence against the Kurds.

5. Whether, after the events of Talori of last year, the Vali of Bitlis exercised due discretion, and took all reasonable precautions to prevent a conflict between the Kurds and Armenians, and unnecessary bloodshed.

6. Whether his Excellency permitted, and if so, whether he was justified in permitting the gathering of large hordes of armed Kurds, and their employment in the repression of an alleged rebellion.

7. Whether the Armenians of Sassoon, in arms either against the Imperial Government or to defend themselves against Kurdish attacks, could not have been reduced to submission by a reasonable display of force, and firm and just treatment, including in the first alternative the severest punishment of the ringleaders, without its being necessary to proceed to such extremities as appear to have been resorted to.

No. 67.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 31.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 21, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 17 of the 8th instant, inclosing copies of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, and of a Memorandum of events in the Sassoon district, which he has given to Mr. Shipley for his assistance while serving as Delegate with the Commission of Inquiry.

I approve your Excellency's action in communicating copies of the Memorandum and its annexes to the French and Russian Ambassadors at Constantinople.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 68.

Foreign Office to Rev. J. Hunt Cooke.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 21, 1895.

I AM directed by the Earl of Kimberley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, requesting his Lordship to receive a deputation from the General Body of Dissenting Ministers for the purpose of presenting a Resolution relative to the condition of the Armenians in Asiatic Turkey.

I am to state, in reply, that at the present moment, when Her Majesty's Government are awaiting the result of the inquiry which is about to be made into recent events in the Vilayet of Bitlis, Lord Kimberley does not think it would be desirable for him to have an interview with a deputation on the subject. But if you will be good enough to forward the Resolution in question, his Lordship will be glad to receive it, and will communicate it to his colleagues.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 69.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 22.)

(No. 22.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 22, 1895, 11·5 A.M.

DELEGATES reached Moush safely yesterday.

No. 70.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 22.)

(No. 23.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 22, 1895, 12·30 P.M.

MR. GRAVES telegraphs that of the prisoners in Erzinghian, referred to in your Lordship's telegram No. 7 of the 11th instant, none were condemned to death.

Though the figures given in my telegram to your Lordship No. 14 are doubtful, the substance of the information is confirmed.

No. 71.

Sir A. Nicolson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 12.) *Sophia, January 19, 1895.*

My Lord,

THE Ottoman Commissioner informed me this morning that he had spoken seriously to the Prime Minister, not only on the latitude which the Government were allowing to Macedonians and Armenians in Bulgaria for holding meetings to ventilate the alleged grievances of their compatriots in the Ottoman Empire, but also in regard to the treatment to which Mussulman Ottoman subjects were being submitted.

As to the first point, Nebil Bey said that he had protested strongly, and had said that either the Government were without authority, or that they intentionally permitted an agitation to proceed which was directed against the Ottoman Government. As to the second point, he had referred to an incident which had occurred at Rustchuk, when Armenians had scoffed at and insulted Mussulmans during their prayers in a mosque; and to the enrolment of, or payment of the military exemption tax, by Ottoman Mussulmans. Nebil Bey said that he had received no satisfactory replies to his representations, beyond vague promises of inquiry.

The Bulgarian Government consider that attempts to suppress the meetings would only lead to greater agitation, and are of opinion that so long as the activity of the Macedonians or Armenians is limited to meetings and resolutions no serious attention need be paid to their proceedings. M. Natchovitz told me recently that the Government were quite alive to the necessity of not allowing any overt acts to be committed, and that they had taken measures to prevent any bands from crossing the frontier.

It is reported in the papers here that the Macedonian Society has decided to send delegates into Macedonia to inquire into the condition of affairs in that province, and that they were to report the results of their investigations to the Central Committee. If it be true that the Society really intends taking this step, the Government could doubtless prevent it, if they were so minded, and prohibit the dispatch of agents who would probably not restrict their action to simple investigation.

Nebil Bey has, on more that one occasion, expressed his regret to me that the Government is apparently so powerless and undecided, and laments that the firm hand of M. Stambuloff no longer holds the reins of the Administration.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

P.S.—I have sent a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople.

A. N.

No. 72.

General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers (Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist), to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 23.)

My Lord, *Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, January 23, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to hand your Lordship a copy of a Resolution passed at a meeting of the General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations (Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist) in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, specially convened for the purpose on the 15th January inst.:—

"That we emphatically express our detestation of the long-continued cruelties perpetrated, in defiance of Treaty obligations, by the officials of the Turkish Government upon Armenian Christians, culminating in the recent massacres.

"We note with thankfulness that our Government is taking action with the object of preventing a continuance of the wrong.

"We protest against any Commission of Inquiry which includes officials of the Turkish Government implicated in the charges of persecution.

"We demand a thorough inquiry by unprejudiced persons, and that such action be immediately taken thereon as shall set free the Armenian Christians who are prisoners for their faith.

"We further demand that such changes be made as shall secure the Armenians throughout the Turkish Empire from a repetition of the inhuman oppression.

"We call for this measure of justice in the name of our common humanity, and in accordance with the provisions of the Berlin Treaty and the Cyprus Convention."

I regret, my Lord, that you are unable to grant the deputation appointed to hand you this an interview, and beg to remain, yours, &c.

(Signed) J. HUNT COOKE,
Honorary Secretary.

No. 73.

Evangelical Alliance to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 24.)

My Lord; 7, *Adam Street, Strand, London, January 23, 1895.*

REFERRING to correspondence which has already passed between your Lordship and the Council of the Evangelical Alliance, on the subject of the persecution of the Protestants at Ordou, I am desired by the Council to express their high appreciation of the untiring efforts of Sir Philip Currie, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, and their thankfulness for the results obtained in this matter.

Having had, during the past few years, repeatedly to bring before Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs cases of religious persecution in Turkey, they gratefully acknowledge the attention with which their representations have been received. Care has been taken, however, only to plead on behalf of those who were suffering on account of their religion; and thus the Evangelical Alliance has not felt called upon specially to approach Her Majesty's Government with regard to the recently reported massacres in Armenia, believing that the circumstances were so grave as to insure the prompt attention of the Great Powers on the broad ground of our common humanity. While the Council greatly rejoices to learn that concerted measures have been taken to secure a searching inquiry into the recent deplorable events in Armenia, they earnestly hope that the reports which have been published may yet be proved to have been much exaggerated.

At the same time they desire respectfully to urge upon your Lordship that, in the negotiations which may take place with the Turkish Government, special emphasis should be given to the principles of religious liberty secured by the Hatti-Humayoun and the Berlin Treaty, but which have been so constantly evaded or rendered void by the action of the Turkish authorities. If these Treaty stipulations were faithfully observed by the Sultan's Government and duly carried out by its officials, there would be no need to make constant appeals for religious freedom, however much it might be necessary to protest against the misrule and oppression of the people generally.

For many years past there has been a reactionary spirit prevailing among Turkish officials, and inch by inch the Christians have been robbed of their liberties; the policy seems to have been to harass and persecute the Protestants, and especially those who, by education and general ability, have raised themselves above the common level. While in some instances redress has been secured through the good offices of Her Majesty's Government, in many more cases the Protestant Christians have continued, year after year, to suffer the loss of rights which belong to them by the Sultan's promises.

The following extracts from a communication just received from the Constantinople Committee of the Evangelical Alliance show the anxiety as to the future felt by men who, many of them, have spent a lifetime in the country:—

"The whole policy of Turkey during the past five years has changed into a direct war on the Christian religion in this country. . . . . The harrying of Christians in the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Erzroum, Sivas, and Angora during the past two years is a part of the same policy, and literally thousands of Mahommedans have been presented by the Government with the houses and lands of Christians of these provinces who have been either killed or robbed of their all, and driven from the country. . . . . Now the real question that Europe ought to consider is not the means of obtaining redress for the Sassoon massacre, but the much greater one of the means of stopping this war on Christianity, by simply enforcing the Treaties that Turkey has trodden under foot. . . . . If this anti-Christian policy is not stopped now it will ruin Turkey later, for then Europe will have to intervene with arms and destroy this Ottoman dynasty. . . . . If the Turkish Government would stop attempting to destroy Christians and use them instead, it would acquire a new leave of life. The Christians of Asiatic Turkey love life, family, honour, but they are not generally enemies of Turkish rule."

The Council therefore venture most earnestly to ask that Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople (who has already done much for liberty) should be instructed to insist upon the Sultan's fulfilling the promises made and remade regarding religious liberty throughout the Ottoman Empire. The Protestant Christians of Turkey are among the most orderly, industrious, and loyal subjects of the Sultan, and it is for those that the Evangelical Alliance, which represents Christians of all nations, now again pleads.

I remain, &c.
(Signed) A. J. ARNOLD,
General Secretary.

No. 74.

M. Caranoff to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 25.)

Silistria, January 24, 1895.

(Télégraphique.)
COLONIES Arménienne et Macédonienne Silistra sont réunies meeting général 1,000 personnes et résolu unanimement protester Puissances Signataires Traité Berlin boucheries sanglantes des Turcs en Arménie et pillages Turcs en Macédoine et demander urgence réformes promises exécution Articles LXI et XXIII Traité Berlin. Président meeting Caranoff; membres: Minassian Hadji Artin Popoff Maximoff.

No. 75.

Sir E. Monson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 25.)

(No. 12.) *Vienna, January 25, 1895.*
(Telegraphic.) P.

COUNT KALNOKY is apprehensive of eventual trouble in Macedonia from agitation in that country arising from the difficulties in Armenia. His Excellency would raise no objections to an increase of Turkish garrisons, and has begged Germany, as a Power whose designs would not be open to any suspicion, to give the Porte notice of possible impending danger, and to urge the necessity of sending honest Valis, and of generally reforming the administration.

No. 76.

[Nil.]

No. 77.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 26.)

(No. 31.) *Constantinople, January 26, 1895, 7·30 P.M.*
(Telegraphic.) P.

THE suspension of the Vali of Bitlis was demanded by the Delegates at the first meeting of the Commission on the 24th of this month. The demand was refused and referred to Constantinople.

We are going to send our Dragomans to the Porte to-morrow to insist on the suspension, and we have instructed the Delegates to cease to attend the Commission until it has been granted. We shall also inform the Porte that the inquiry will be considered null and void if it goes on while the Delegates are absent, and that we shall have to decide upon what steps it may be necessary to take to institute an independent inquiry in place of it.

It is thought that the Sultan will yield, but he yesterday expressed himself to the French Ambassador as strongly opposed to the suspension.

No. 78.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 11.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 27, 1895.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram No. 31 of yesterday, and I entirely approve your action as to the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis.

No. 79.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 32.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 28, 1895, 12·20 P.M.*

THE Sublime Porte have sent orders that no obstacle should be placed in the way of M. Behesnelian's journey to Tarsus, referred to in your Lordship's telegram No. 147 of the 26th December.

No. 80.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 34.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 28, 1895, 4 P.M.*

EAMER BEY, one of the original members of the Sassoon Commission, has been provisionally appointed Vali of Bitlis, in the place of Hassan Tahsin Pasha, who has been dismissed and ordered to return to Constantinople.

No. 81.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 12.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 28, 1895.*

I HAVE received your telegrams Nos. 14 and 23 of the 15th and 22nd instant respectively, relative to the sentences passed on the Armenian prisoners at Erzinghian.

Reports are still repeated that twenty-four of these prisoners were condemned to death on the 15th November, and it is stated in a Reuter's telegram from Vienna that the Court of Cassation at Constantinople has confirmed these death sentences, and that they will be carried out at once. Can you ascertain whether there is any ground for these reports?

No. 82.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 37.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 28, 1895.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 21 of the 9th instant, relative to the attitude of the Armenian Catholic Patriarch towards the inquiry into the alleged massacres in the Sassoon district.

It would be desirable that you should communicate what is stated in your despatch to Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, if you have not already done so.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 83.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 41.) *Constantinople, January* 18, 1895.

My Lord,

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 391, Confidential, of the 14th December, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of an extract from Mr. Boyajian's previous letter referred to in his letter of the 29th October, which formed the second inclosure to my despatch to your Lordship No. 557 of the 3rd December.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 83.

Acting Vice-Consul Boyajian to Consul Graves.

(Private.) *Diarbekir, October* 15, 1894.

(Extract.)

WHILE in Kharput I learned from a good source that the Mushir, his Excellency Zeki Pasha, stated that the Vali of Bitlis and the Mutes-arif of Genj, by reporting the Armenians as rebels and setting the Kurds upon them, were responsible for all the mischief done, whereas the Armenians were not in reality in rebellion.

The Kurds in the district of Silivan were and still are in a very restless condition, but, thanks to the foresight and effective measures taken by our Vali for the preservation of the tranquillity of the province, with the exception of isolated cases of murder of Armenians, nothing like a general rising happened.

Note.—Silivan is the Caza of Diarbekir, bordering on the disturbed region in Bitlis.

No. 84.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 42.) *Constantinople, January* 19, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE had two long interviews with Mgr. Izzetirlian, the new Armenian Patriarch. He gave me the impression of a man of resolute character, but he takes a very despairing and gloomy view of the prospects of his countrymen. He has evidently made up his mind that it is the deliberate intention of the Sultan to crush the Armenians, and he believes that their only chance of safety is in the interference of the European Powers.

He was strong in his expressions of gratitude to England for the efforts she has made on behalf of the Armenians, but has no confidence that the Commission of Inquiry will be allowed to elicit the truth as to the massacres.

During the recent crisis there has been far more liberty of speech and action on the part of the Armenians than had been ventured upon for some years past. The Patriarch's discourse in the Armenian Cathedral of Koum Kapou on the occasion of his installation, and his attitude when received by the Sultan, were sufficiently bold to have caused great irritation at the Palace.

His tone is that of a desperate man, and he repeatedly urged me to remember that if the present action of the Powers does not result in the establishment of reforms, the position of the Armenians will be far worse than it was before the events in Sassoun became the subject of discussion. With regard to these events the Patriarch said that they only differed in degree from those that had been constantly occurring in most of the provinces inhabited by Armenians. Massacres on a smaller scale were frequent, a large part of the population, including all the higher ecclesiastics, was in prison, and the attitude of the military and civil officials towards the Armenians was one of bitter hostility and unbridled violence.

I explained to the Patriarch the course which had been followed by the British Government in regard to reforms, and to the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry.

In the years which followed the conclusion of the Treaty of Berlin we had, I said, done our best to obtain the execution of the LXIst Article of the Treaty, but the

indifference of some of the Powers had made those efforts unavailing. The British Government had also for a considerable period of time maintained a large Consular staff in Asia Minor, and had brought pressure to bear both at Constantinople and in the provinces, in order to obtain an improvement in the Administration; they had, however, met with stubborn resistance, and had at last given up the task as hopeless. Since that time they had confined themselves to urging redress in the special cases which were brought to their notice by British Consular officers. An opportunity had at length arisen, owing to the excitement aroused, not only in England but in Europe generally, by the reports of the Sassoun massacres, for bringing to bear upon the Sultan that united pressure which was indispensable in order to produce any lasting effect.

The form that this pressure had taken was to insist upon a searching and impartial investigation into the occurrences at Sassoun by a Turkish Commission supervised by European Delegates.

I agreed with him that the Commission alone would be insufficient, but it was a step towards the desired end, and no pains should be spared to make it efficient.

Other Powers were engaged in the task besides England, and it was of the utmost importance for the future welfare of the Armenians that those Powers should continue to act in concert. In order to secure their co-operation it would be advisable to avoid for the present putting forward any scheme of reform that might be considered as likely to lead to a disturbance of the peace.

I read to his Beatitude a few notes that I had put down, and which are founded on the suggestions of Aberdin Pasha and Sir Charles Wilson. I had reason, I said, to think that the proposals they contained would be favourably viewed by the Russian Government, as being of a nature that the Turkish Government might by the united pressure of the Powers be induced to accept. I said that I should be glad for any private information to have his opinion upon them. He undertook to consider them, and to communicate his observations.

The Patriarch showed me the draft of a "takrir," or letter, which he proposed to address to the Porte, stating his intention of sending a Prelate to the Armenian provinces to replace those who were in prison. I suggested the omission of some expressions in this paper, which seemed likely to have an irritating effect, and I recommended his Beatitude to avoid giving any unnecessary provocation to the Sultan, who is already in a state of extreme irritation against his Armenian subjects.

He promised to follow my advice, but said that he considered it necessary that formal reference should be made by the Patriarchate to the events in Sassoun.

The late Patriarch did not venture to hold any intercourse with the foreign Embassies, but I think it very important that Mgr. Izzetirlian should not allow himself to be coerced by the Palace in this respect. He holds a similar opinion and expressed his determination to maintain his liberty of action in regard to calling upon me when occasion requires it.

I may add that communications between the Patriarchate and this Embassy will be facilitated by the fact that his Beatitude's Secretary, M. Mesditchian, was educated at Oxford, and speaks English fluently.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 85.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 44.) *Constantinople, January* 19, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond on the subject of the trial of political prisoners at that place.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 85.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Trebizond, January 11, 1895.

Sir,

IN my earlier despatches of last year I reported to the Embassy the imprisonment of some Armenian political suspects at Samsoon.

The arrests took place in the months of January and February, and those remanded, numbering seventeen in all (eleven from Charshamba), were conveyed for further trial to Trebizond in the revenue-cutter "Ineboli." They were landed here on the 21st June, and marched to prison heavily chained through the town, a treatment which met with the Vali's great displeasure, and obtained for them the comfort of being kept unfettered in gaol.

Owing to the dilatoriness of the Samsoon authorities, and to the restrictions of Quarantine Regulations, the necessary documents for the prosecution did not reach Trebizond before the middle of October.

In the meanwhile, the prisoners were very anxious as to the cause of the delay. In their uncertainty of receiving a fair hearing they petitioned me to intercede, or, if this could not be done with success, to transmit for them a telegram they inclosed for the Sultan, soliciting that their trial should take place at Constantinople. The Vali, on being informed by me of this, ordered the gaolers not only to furnish the prisoners with writing materials, but to allow them to correspond freely either by wire or by letter, a permission they availed themselves of by telegraphing their appeal to the Palace.

Copy of a Memorandum on these trials is herewith inclosed, signed by Mr. Hekimian, the Dragoman of this Consulate, who had been charged by me to attend unofficially the sittings of the Court, open, as they were, to Consular officials and to the public at large.

From my frequent conversations with the Vali, I fully anticipated that in these trials there would be no miscarriage of justice. It is with great satisfaction I am now able to report that such is the case. The proceedings terminated yesterday, with the result that the innocent, twelve in number, have been released, and the guilty condemned: one to fifteen years, two to ten years, and two to five years' imprisonment, with the right of appealing to the Court of Cassation at Constantinople.

It will be admitted, I think, that for once in political indictments a Turkish Court has conducted itself with the strictest impartiality and justice. The Vali, Cadri Bey, the President of the Criminal Court of Appeal, Hamdi Bey, and its two Turkish members, Zia Bey and Izzet Effendi, have thus considerably raised the prestige of their Government. They deserve for this not only praise but some distinction of an exceptional kind, which, if conferred on them, will very likely tempt and encourage others to emulate their exemplary conduct.

The necessity of meting out condign punishment to the guilty cannot and will not, I believe, be questioned, especially now that there is no longer any doubt of there existing a few hot-headed Armenians, whose political restlessness and disaffection border on the verge of an insurrection for independence, rather than for reforms or even for autonomy.

The ill-treatment of the prisoners in the Samsoon gaol is to be made by the Governor-General a matter of further investigation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 85.

Memorandum on the Trials of the Armenian Political Prisoners at Trebizond.

AS instructed by Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, I attended regularly the political trials held within the last three months at the local Criminal Court of Appeal.

The following is a summary of my notes:—

The Court was composed of the President, Hamdi Bey, the Public Prosecutor, Cafih Bey, the Turkish members, Zia Bey and Izzet Effendi, the Greek member, Panaga Caeoulides, and the Armenian member, Gaspar Khanedanian, besides the Armenian Garabed Effendi as Turkish scribe.

The counsels for the accused were the two Greek advocates, Lazar and Hermidès, and the Turk, Midhad Effendi.

The sittings took place on the 22nd and 25th October, 12th November, 6th, 16th, and 22nd December, and 8th and 10th January. The lengthier adjournments were occasioned by the Court having had to await witnesses from Samsoon and Charshamba, which numbered in all twenty-five, summoned in batches. Among them was the Armenian informer, Solomon Papazian, a spy in the pay of the Charshamba Kaimakam, Moussa Pasha, who brought about the arrests by insinuating to the authorities that the villagers of Kapou-Kaya by two-thirds, and of Oulouponnar by one-half, were conspirators, paying from 1 to 5 piastres a-month for revolutionary purposes.

At most of the sittings the Vali was present, and at three sittings the Russian Vice-Consul for Rizeh. The Dragomans of the other Consulates attended occasionally, and there were always among the audience a large number of Turks, Greeks, and Armenians.

An account of each case may be briefly given thus:—

The prisoners condemned are—

1. Adom Aslanian, to fifteen years; age 30, native of Sivas; arrested 2nd January in Vartighian's house at Samsoon.

Confessed himself to be a revolutionist. Is accused of having taken part in Koumi-Kapou disturbances in 1890, and of interviewing Armenian Committees in Roumania, Egypt, and Greece. Engaged latterly in inciting people to revolt against Turkish misrule. Spoke vehemently in court on dire necessity for reforms and punishment of corrupt officials. Complained of undergoing ill-treatment in Samsoon prison, in order to testify falsely the complicity of certain innocent Armenians.

The prosecutor said his confessions proved his guilt. His advocate remarked, in defence, the mission of the prisoner was against injustice, and not against the Sultan or the Empire.

2. Fissend Kalousdian, to ten years; age 23, native of Trebizond, and ex-clerk of the Messageries Maritimes Agency at Samsoon.

Accused of being an agitator sent by Adom Aslanian to Kapou-Kaya village of Charshamba, and of having distributed rifles and pamphlets there. Reported to have escaped from Charshamba in woman's clothes. Arrested at Samsoon with Adom. Out of seven witnesses Solomon only bore evidence against him. Prosecutor said that his friendship with Adom, and his being found with him hidden under the stairs of Vartighian's house, proved his guilt. His advocate said the facts showed merely fear and innocence.

3. Kevork Vartighian, to ten years; age 22, native of Harpoot, but settled at Samsoon, and ex-clerk of prisoner, Dzaroukian Garabed.

Accused of hiding and helping Adom, of attempting to escape to Charshamba when his father's house was searched, and of possessing compromising papers. He said the object of his journey to Charshamba and the meaning of his letters were purely commercial.

4. Bakerdjian Garabed, to five years; age 30, tailor, of Charshamba.

Accused, on the deposition of Solomon and Karabashoglou, of having imparted with prisoners Avedis Terzibashian and Fissend nine Martinis and 1,000 cartridges for distribution among Armenians. They were bought, he declared, for 2*l.* from a Circassian, Hasbi, for sale to a certain Mehmed Bey, who wanted them for Batoum, but, delaying to buy them, necessitated their being distributed until disposed.

Witness Serkissoglou said he met Garabed and Avedis and Hasbi, but not Fissend, and, in accompanying them as far as Keshlu, saw each of them with one rifle only, their horse being covered over with a sheepskin coat. Witnesses Hampar Ouzounian and Ohanes Kemmurdjioglou confirmed the above, adding that the accused declared to them they were after brigands. Prosecutor remarked that their bearing arms was suspicious in the actual state of the country.

5. Avedis Terzibashian, to five years; age 22, a Protestant, of Charshamba.

Accused of being an associate of the above Garabed Bakerdjian. He confirmed that prisoner's version, and demanded Hasbi's appearance in court as witness, who, being now an outlaw, could not be summoned. The advocate observed that the authorities were justified in seizing weapons for sale, but not in imprisoning their possessors.

The prisoners acquitted are:

1. Garabed Dzaroukian, merchant and agent at Samsoon, of the Trebizond-Manchester firm, Muratian. Found innocent on the charge of exchanging letters thought compromising with his branch office at Sivas. He complained, in common with others, of having been tortured in Samsoon prison, so as to denounce Armenians, as well as to purchase his release. The advocate explained that the accusation was inspired by his rival, the Samsoon Turkish merchant, Lenlizadé.

2. Vartighian Agop, merchant at Samsoon, and father of the condemned Kevork.

Accused of possessing prohibited books and of having sheltered the condemned Adom and Fissend. Said in defence that he had let his house to them without knowing them to be revolutionists.

3. Garabed Kapriélian, a butcher of Samsoon. Accused of having procured a horse for Kevork Vartighian, and helping him to escape. The Court admitted his having hired the said horse for his own journey to Charshamba.

4. Agop Hanikarian, of Charshamba. Solomon deposed in his case that he was not only Fissend's friend, but a captain among revolutionists. The defendant said that Solomon was actuated against him by private hatred, and to this effect evidence was borne by witnesses, Dombaloglou and Kalaydjioglou. The accused complained of being beaten in the Samsoon prison by Reshid Chboush and other zaptiehs, and that he temporarily lost his sight from ill-treatment. The Kurd zaptieh, Salih, and four Moslem prisoners from the Samsoon gaol, gave evidence of said ill-treatment undergone by Agop Khanikar and some of his companions. But their evidence was considered insufficient by the Public Prosecutor, as seven Samsoon zaptiehs summoned as witnesses did not admit the allegation.

5. Agopos Keshishian, a villager of Kapoukaya, admitted to have innocently given Fissend food and lodging for a night.

6. Marcar Gulian, a Protestant of Kapoukaya, was acquitted on the charge of harbouring Avedis Terzibashian. He said it was got up by Solomon, because some time ago he accused him of having, with the Circassian brigand, Shirin, carried off his son, for whose release he (Marcar) had paid a ransom. Solomon declared he had nothing to do with this act of brigandage. Other witnesses testified to Marcar being an honest, respectable man.

7. Bedros Garibian, a young lad, suspected by Solomon only of having helped Bakerdjian and Avedis Terzibashian in the distribution of the nine rifles, was proved innocent.

8. Agop Hamshighian, of Kapoukaya, accused of being Bakerdjian and Terzibashian's accomplice, having received from them and hidden in the cupboard of his house five rifles and some cartridges. It was proved, however, that this was against his will.

9. Garabed Hampighian, a sportsman, of Kapoukaya, accused of receiving two rifles from Bakerdjian and Terzibashian. It was declared by him in defence that he unwillingly kept them for a few days in trust when he was denounced by Solomon.

10. Mardiros Kazezian, of Kapoukaya, declared that he ignored a rifle had been left in the courtyard of his house until discovered by the authorities.

11. Garabed Dombalian, a Baptist Protestant, of Erbaa, on the confines of the Sivas Vilayet, was denounced by Solomon as having carried revolutionary messages between Charshamba and Marsovan. The accused, who is more than 80 years old, maintained that religious and private disputes between himself and Solomon's brother, the Presbyterian pastor of Kapoukaya, caused this charge to be brought against him. Two witnesses attested to his bearing a good reputation.

12. Chapken Kekin, an ex-rural guard of Charshamba, was accused by Solomon of having recently become a captain among revolutionists. He proved, however, by four witnesses and by a medical certificate, that he had been ill for some six months before his arrest.

(Signed) GOMIDAS HEKIMIAN.

Trebizond, January 11, 1895.

No. 86.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 45.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, January 19, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond in regard to the revolutionary movement at Zilleh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 86.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir,

Trebizond, January 12, 1895.

THE following extract is taken from Dr. Jewett's letter to me, dated Sivas, 9th January, 1895:—

"We hear talk of a pardon having been granted to political prisoners, but see no signs of it here or at Tokat. However, about twenty school children who had been in prison about two months as revolutionists, because they had formed an association to supply themselves and poor scholars with slate pencils, &c., were released recently.

"The following account of the recent revolutionary movement at Zilleh is said by reliable Armenians to be true. An Armenian came from Zilleh and told the Vali that there was a revolutionary movement going at Zilleh and gave him the names of about seventy-five persons engaged in it. The Vali told the informer to go back and get more evidence, and at same time the Vali instructed the Chief of Police to watch the informer.

"After a time the police searched the houses of the accused, found revolutionary documents and arrested a large number of prisoners. The prisoners protested their ignorance and innocence of the revolutionary. Upon the payment of money they were released. The Chief of Police said, that following the Vali's instructions he had discovered that the informer had set up a 'fabric' of revolutionary documents, which he distributed. The informer was searched and the 'fabric' discovered. He is now in prison, but the ex-prisoners fear they may be returned to prison to make the course of the Government appear more correct."

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 87.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 46.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, January 19, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora in regard to the vexatious conduct of local authorities towards Bible colporteurs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 87.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

Sir,

Angora, January 14, 1895.

THE Turkish Government having recently given publicity to the sequester effected on the goods of an Armenian bookseller of Van ("Levant Herald" of the 7th January), it may be of interest to place on record the interference of late, in these parts, with the Bible colporteurs, which cannot but be taken as a sign of the suspicion, I think unreasonable, resting on these agents of the American Bible Society.

The first case that came under my notice occurred in November 1893, when Kozma Bodosoglou, a Protestant Greek, and the duly authorized colporteur for the Angora district, was arrested at Istanos, and his books—chiefly versions of the Old and New Testaments in English, Greek, and Armenian—confiscated, merely on suspicion that they might contain seditious matter, and notwithstanding his possessing a permit from the local authorities. After several days' imprisonment he was conveyed to Angora as a political suspect, but the trumpery nature of the charge had to be admitted, and he

was immediately released. The Kaïmakam of Istanós was also sent for and admonished by the Vali not to repeat such a blunder.

The next case took place at Kir Shéhir in May 1894, when the same man had his books confiscated, he himself being arrested. He was let out on bail for a few days, but was reimprisoned in order to be tried on some trumpery charge as a suspicious character. After twelve days' incarceration he was allowed to come to Angora, under escort. His perfect innocence of the charges brought against him was easily proved and his release procured.

In both cases the assistance of Her Majesty's Consulate was solicited and granted, otherwise there is every reason to suppose matters would not have ended so satisfactorily.

In order to prevent further interference with the free sale of the Scriptures, a special certificate had to be demanded from the Director of the Public Education Department, as also a letter from the Vali to the Mutessarif of Kir Shéhir, in which he was told not to arrest the colporteurs, but simply to confiscate and forward to Angora any books not enumerated in the list authorized by the Ministry of Public Education, in case the contents should be of an injurious nature.

In December last, two further cases were reported to me; one was that of Yovan, colporteur, of the Cesarea Mission for the Yuzgat Sandjak, who was arrested, but released after a few hours' confinement; and the other, that of Manoug, also a colporteur of the Cesarea Mission for the Konieh Vilayet, who was arrested at Karaman and sent under escort to Konieh, where, however, he was released on bail.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 88.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 48.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January 19, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 43 of to-day's date, I inclose, for your Lordship's information, a copy of the notes respecting reforms for the Armenian provinces which I communicated to the Patriarch.

The main feature of the proposals is that the Mutessarifs, Kaïmakams, and Mudirs should be Turkish and Christian, in accordance with the proportionate number of those communities in each vilayet, sandjak, and caza. This is a departure from the plan of Sir C. Wilson, who proposed that the Mutessarifs and Kaïmakams should be "selected from that community which is of most importance in the sandjak or caza whether from its numbers or wealth."

The reason for the change is that, according to the existing ethnographical distribution, it is doubtful whether any sandjak or caza contains a majority of Armenians. I have had the benefit in drawing up these notes of Colonel Chermside's practical experience of the subject. They are merely a sketch showing the principle on which the reforms might be based, leaving the details to be filled up hereafter.

I have not discussed the question of reforms with my Russian and French colleagues, but from conversations which Baron de Calice has held with them, and of which he has kindly communicated the substance to me, I have reason to believe that both M. de Nélidoff and M. Cambon would not be opposed to the bases I have suggested.

I should be glad to learn whether they meet generally with your Lordship's approval.

The last paragraph (No. 10) was added in order to meet some observations made by the Patriarch as to the insufficiency of any ordinary scheme of reform to deal with the question of the Kurds. It is founded on passages in the collective note addressed by the Powers to the Porte on the 7th September, 1880.

I expect shortly to receive his Beatitude's further remarks on my notes.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 88.

Memorandum.

1. VALI for five years with approval of Powers, removable only by Commission *ad hoc* approved by Powers.

2. A Council-General of Delegates from the sandjaks; communities to be represented according to their numbers, to have control of finance.

3. Vilayet to be divided into sandjaks. The Mutessarifs to be both Moslem and Christian in a ratio proportional to the respective numbers of these communities in the vilayet.

4. Sandjaks to be divided into cazas. The Kaïmakams to be both Moslem and Christian in a ratio proportional to the respective numbers of these communities in the sandjak.

5. Cazas to be divided into nahiés. The Mudirs to be both Moslem and Christian in a ratio proportional to the respective numbers of these communities in the cazas.

6. The cazas to have Administrative Councils representing the communities, and containing no *ex officio* members.

7. Vekils elected by the Notables of each community to represent its interests at the chief town of the vilayet.

8. A Court of Assize for each vilayet composed of two Christians and two Mussulmans, who would at fixed dates visit all places where justice is administered, would inspect the prisons, revise Judgments, here appeals, and effect a periodical gaol delivery.

9. A mixed gendarmerie in which Mussulmans and Christians should be represented in proportion to their numbers both as regards officers and men.

10. Special measures for the protection of the Armenians against the Kurds. (See collective note of the 7th September, 1880.)

Annex.

Collective Note addressed to the Porte.

M. le Ministre, *Constantinople, le 7 Septembre,* 1880.

LES Soussignés ont reçu la note en date du 5 Juillet dernier, par laquelle la Sublime Porte a répondu au paragraphe de leur communication du 11 Juin, relatif aux améliorations et aux réformes administratives que le Gouvernement Ottoman s'est engagé, par l'Article LXI du Traité de Berlin, à introduire dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens. Une étude attentive de ce document leur a prouvé que les propositions formulées par le Gouvernement Ottoman ne répondent ni à l'esprit ni à la lettre de cet Article. Les Puissances représentées par les Soussignés n'ignorent pas que le Gouvernement Ottoman a envoyé deux Commissions dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens; mais elles ont des raisons de penser que ces missions n'ont abouti à aucun résultat, et la Porte, contrairement aux obligations résultant pour elle de l'Article LXI, s'est abstenue de les porter à leur connaissance.

Rien ne prouve qu'une amélioration quelconque ait été introduite dans l'administration de la justice. De nombreux rapports Consulaires établissent, au contraire, que la situation actuelle, au point de vue de l'indépendance des Tribunaux Civils ou Criminels, est aussi peu satisfaisante sinon pire que par le passé.

En ce qui concerne la gendarmerie et la police, la note du 5 Juillet affirme que la Porte a invité plusieurs officiers spéciaux à présenter des projets de réforme de ces deux services. Les Puissances n'ont pas eu connaissance de ces projets, et le Gouvernement Ottoman n'est même pas en état d'affirmer qu'ils lui aient été présentés.

Les Soussignés ne sauraient donc admettre que la réponse de votre Excellence ait donné la moindre satisfaction aux plaintes formulées dans leur note du 11 Juin.

Ils se croient d'ailleurs d'autant plus autorisés à réduire à leur juste valeur les efforts tentés à ce point de vue par le Gouvernement Ottoman, que la Porte, à en juger par cette même réponse, se rend évidemment un compte moins exact de la situation et des obligations que lui impose le Traité de Berlin.

Les termes mêmes dans lesquels la Sublime Porte a cru pouvoir s'expliquer sur les crimes commis, ou signalés comme ayant été commis, dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens, prouvent qu'elle se refuse à reconnaître le degré d'anarchie qui règne dans ces provinces, et la gravité d'un état de choses, dont la prolongation entraînerait, selon toute vraisemblance, l'anéantissement des populations Chrétiennes dans de vastes districts.

La note du 5 Juillet ne formule aucune proposition sérieuse tendant à mettre un terme aux excès des Circassiens et des Kurdes. Il est cependant à craindre que ces excès ne puissent être prévenus par l'application des lois communes. Des mesures de rigueur exceptionnelles peuvent seules mettre un terme à des violences qui, sur plusieurs points des provinces désignées par l'Article LXI, sont un perpétuel danger pour les biens, l'honneur, et la vie des Arméniens.

Par l'Article LXI du Traité de Berlin la Porte s'est engagée "à réaliser sans plus de retard les améliorations et les réformes qu'exigent les besoins locaux dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens." Les Soussignés ont le regret de constater que les réformes générales indiquées par la note du 5 Juillet ne tiennent aucun compte des "besoins locaux" que signale l'Article précité. Les Puissances accueilleront sans doute avec satisfaction l'introduction de larges réformes dans toutes les parties de l'Empire Ottoman; mais elles tiennent avant tout à l'entière exécution du Traité de Berlin, et elles ne peuvent admettre que la Porte se considère comme libérée des engagements qu'elle a contractés de ce chef en proposant une réorganisation dans laquelle ne figure aucune des réformes spéciales stipulées au profit des provinces spécifiées par ce même Traité. Le caractère particulier de ces provinces étant, d'ailleurs, la prédominance de l'élément Chrétien dans des districts d'une grande étendue, toute réforme qui ne tiendrait pas compte de ce fait ne saurait aboutir à un résultat satisfaisant.

Les Soussignés estiment qu'il est également indispensable de tenir compte d'une autre particularité que présentent ces mêmes provinces. La Porte paraît vouloir appliquer un même règlement aux Arméniens et aux Kurdes. Il convient, avant tout, de les séparer administrativement, autant que cela est pratiquement possible, vu l'impossibilité absolue de régir de la même manière les populations sédentaires et des tribus à demi-nomades. La distribution des communes et des groupes administratifs en général, devrait par suite, se faire de façon à réunir le plus d'éléments homogènes possibles; elle devrait tendre à grouper les Arméniens, ou, au besoin, les Arméniens et les Turcs, en excluant les Kurdes. Par suite encore l'élément Kurde nomade, vivant dans les montagnes et ne descendant dans les plaines habitées par les Chrétiens que pour y porter le désordre, ne devrait pas être compris dans les relevés statistiques qui détermineront la majorité des habitants dans chaque commune.

On peut supposer que la Sublime Porte a vu dans l'organisation communale proposée par la note du 5 Juillet le moyen de créer des groupes administratifs du premier degré dans lesquels la grande majorité des habitants appartiendrait à la même religion. Rien n'indique toutefois dans ce document que la Porte s'engage à appliquer ce principe.

Les Soussignés constatent avec satisfaction que le Chef d'une commune, dans l'organisation projetée, doit appartenir à la communauté religieuse prépondérante; mais l'absence d'une disposition analogue s'appliquant aux fonctionnaires d'un rang plus élevé, prouve jusqu'à l'évidence que les réformes proposées ne tiennent pas un compte suffisant des "besoins locaux" des provinces désignées par l'Article XLI.

Le Gouvernement Ottoman déclare "qu'il a déjà admis aux fonctions publiques des personnes honnêtes et capables, sans distinction de culte, et que désormais ce fait recevra une application plus large encore. Cette déclaration est extrêmement vague, et les Soussignés pensent qu'ils est d'autant plus nécessaire d'insister sur ce point que les Arméniens affirment que, dans les provinces où ils se trouvent en très grand nombre, il n'y a presque pas d'Arméniens dans les fonctions publiques. Leurs réclamations à cet égard paraissent d'autant plus légitimes qu'il pourrait se faire que la Sublime Porte plaçât à la tête de ces provinces des Gouverneurs Chrétiens sans qu'il en résultât une plus grande certitude, pour les Arméniens, de rencontrer plus d'équité et de justice dans l'Administration.

Des mesures d'un caractère beaucoup plus large que celles qu'indique la note du

Gouvernement Ottoman sont donc nécessaires pour que la Porte s'acquitte des engagements qu'elle a contractés à Berlin.

L'insuffisance des réformes proposées est telle, en général, qu'il semble inutile de discuter les défauts du projet de la Porte. Les observations suivantes, toutefois, s'imposent en quelque sorte à l'esprit:

En déclarant, en premier lieu, que les Administrateurs des communes devront être des fonctionnaires du Gouvernement, choisis par le pouvoir central parmi les membres élus du Conseil Communal, au lieu d'être élus par le Conseil Communal lui-même, la Porte affirme le principe de la centralisation jusqu'au dernier degré de la hiérarchie administrative.

La Porte a d'ailleurs omis de dire, en ce qui concerne les Administrateurs et les membres des Conseils de Commune, s'ils seront nommés à titre viager ou seulement pour un temps. Elle ne dit pas davantage à qui appartiendra le droit de les révoquer de leurs fonctions en cas d'incapacité. Ce droit appartiendra-t-il au Conseil de Préfecture qui les nomme ou à une autre autorité?

La note Ottomane, d'autre part, n'établit de distinction entre la gendarmerie communale et la gendarmerie provinciale, ni quant au mode de recrutement ni à d'autres points de vue. La gendarmerie communale ne diffère de l'autre qu'en ce sens qu'elle est placée sous les ordres du Chef de la Commune. Elle ne se recrute pas dans la commune même, parmi les habitants appartenant au culte prépondérant, et rien ne garantit qu'elle soit spécialement ce qu'elle doit être, c'est-à-dire, une force défensive locale.

L'organisation de la gendarmerie provinciale ne répond pas davantage aux besoins locaux des provinces spécialement désignées par l'Article LXI; la clause d'après laquelle elle doit se recruter, en officiers comme en soldats, "dans toutes les classes des sujets de l'Empire," est encore du caractère le plus vague. Il serait à désirer que les officiers et les soldats de la gendarmerie provinciale fussent recrutés dans la gendarmerie communale, c'est-à-dire, parmi les gardes champêtres qui auront été choisis par les communes elles-mêmes. Ces gardes champêtres chargés de la défense des villages contre les incursions des Kurdes fourniraient à la gendarmerie provinciale un contingent proportionnel à la population de chaque commune. Substituée à l'arbitraire de l'administration provinciale, le principe de l'élection constituerait une garantie sérieuse pour la bonne organisation des forces destinées à assurer la sécurité publique.

La valeur des propositions relatives à la constitution d'une Cour d'Assises dépend avant tout des conditions dans lesquelles cette Cour sera constituée, et la note du 5 Juillet garde le silence à cet égard. Il paraît nécessaire de tenir compte de la prédominance de l'élément Arménien dans certaines provinces et de faire à cet élément une part proportionnelle dans l'organisation de la justice.

Ici encore, d'ailleurs, se posent un certain nombre de questions dont la note Ottomane ne laisse pas entrevoir la solution. Les Juges seront-ils inamovibles ou désignés pour un temps déterminé? D'après quelle loi jugeront-ils? Sera-ce d'après le Chéri? Sera-ce d'après un autre Code? Comment les Cours d'Assises feront-elles respecter leurs arrêts par les tribus Kurdes semi-indépendantes et tout à fait sauvages? Cette dernière question prouve surabondamment combien il est nécessaire d'exclure les Kurdes de l'ensemble des réformes destinées aux populations de l'Arménie et de leur donner une administration séparée conforme à leurs mœurs guerrières et primitives. A l'occasion de cette même question des rapports des deux éléments sédentaires et nomades, les Soussignés expriment la conviction que toutes les servitudes ou corvées imposées par les Kurdes aux Arméniens, et qui dérivent, non pas d'un principe de droit, mais d'un abus invétéré, doivent être abolies.

Ils pensent également que le bénéfice de toutes les réformes stipulées au profit des Arméniens devrait équitablement être acquis aux nombreux Nestoriens qui peuplent le centre et le midi du Kurdistan (Caza de Djoulamerk).

Il est regrettable que le paragraphe relatif au prélèvement d'une certaine somme destinée à subvenir à des besoins locaux tels que l'entretien des écoles, et l'exécution des travaux publics, ne soit pas rédigé en termes plus clairs. On peut admettre cependant qu'il renferme l'idée d'un principe financier d'une certaine valeur et ce principe, dans la pensée des Puissances, se poserait dans les termes suivants. Les taxes se diviseraient en deux catégories: La première, comprenant le produit des droits de douane et de l'impôt sur le sel, serait appliquée aux besoins de l'Empire. La seconde, provenant des revenus généraux du vilayet, serait affectée en premier lieu aux services administratifs de la province. Une partie du surplus serait réservée pour les besoins locaux, et le reste envoyé à Constantinople. Si cette interprétation

est exacte la proposition de la note du 5 Juillet correspondrait plus ou moins à l'Article 19 du Projet de Réorganisation Administrative des Provinces de la Turquie d'Europe présenté par la Sublime Porte à l'examen de la Commission Européenne de la Roumélie-Orientale. Elle constitue assurément une réforme sérieuse, en tant qu'elle consacre le principe qu'il doit être tout d'abord pourvu aux dépenses de la province au moyen d'un prélèvement opéré sur une partie du produit des impôts, mais il est essentiel que ce principe soit entouré de garanties identiques à celles adoptées par la Commission des Réformes Administratives.

Les Soussignés doivent faire observer, en outre, qu'on ne peut pas affecter à tel ou tel autre usage des revenus qui sont déjà hypothéqués.

Le principe de la décentralisation, si nécessaire dans des provinces habitées par une population professant un culte différent de celui de l'autorité centrale, est traité d'une manière peu satisfaisante dans la note de votre Excellence. Il est impossible de compter sur des réformes efficaces aussi longtemps que la position des Gouverneurs-Généraux ne sera pas complètement modifiée. La note laisse bien entrevoir que leurs pouvoirs seront étendus et leurs fonctions garanties, mais des assurances d'un caractère aussi général ne sont pas de nature à résoudre le problème. Tant que l'extension des pouvoirs d'un Gouverneur-Général, et de la responsabilité qui semble absolument nécessaire à l'accomplissement de ses devoirs, n'aura pas été nettement stipulée, tant que des garanties formelles n'ont pas été accordées à ce haut fonctionnaire quant à la durée de sa mission, il sera impossible de formuler une opinion sur l'efficacité des réformes proposées. Il est clair, en effet, que les Gouverneurs-Généraux doivent avoir certaines données sur la durée de leurs fonctions, et être affranchis de l'intervention constante qui se produit, sous le régime actuel, dans les moindres détails de leur gestion administrative, et a paralysé jusqu'à présent leur action. Il est inutile d'ajouter que si cette plus grande indépendance des Valis est partout désirable, elle est absolument nécessaire dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens. Les Puissances, en un mot, convaincues de l'insuffisance des propositions du Gouvernement Ottoman, pensent qu'il y a lieu de tenir un compte plus sérieux des besoins locaux constatés dans ces mêmes provinces, de donner une plus grande extension aux deux grands principes d'égalité et de décentralisation, de prendre des mesures plus efficaces pour l'organisation de la police, et la protection des populations molestées par les Circassiens et les Kurdes, de définir enfin la durée et l'étendue des pouvoirs des Gouverneurs-Généraux. A ce prix, mais à ce prix seulement, pleine satisfaction peut être donnée aux droits et aux espérances créés par l'Article LXI du Traité de Berlin.

La Porte cherche, il est vrai, à diminuer la portée de cet Article, en s'appuyant sur le chiffre de la population Arménienne, et en général de la population Chrétienne, comparé à celui de la population totale. La proportion indiquée par la note diffère tellement de celle que donnent d'autres renseignements que les Puissances ne sauraient l'accepter comme exacte.

Le Tableau ci-joint de la population Arménienne, dressé par les soins du Patriarchat, montre l'écart énorme qui existe entre ces différentes appréciations. La note du 5 Juillet n'indique d'ailleurs que la proportion des Musulmans aux Chrétiens. Les Puissances désireraient avoir communication des données sur lesquelles est basé ce calcul, et elles croient indispensable de faire prendre dans le plus bref délai par une Commission impartiale dont la formation sera ultérieurement déterminée, le chiffre approximatif des Musulmans et des Chrétiens habitant les provinces désignées par l'Article LXI.

Il faut qu'il soit bien entendu que la Porte acceptera les résultats de ce recensement opéré dans des conditions incontestables d'impartialité, et quelle en tiendra compte dans l'organisation des dites provinces.

Il est très probable du reste qu'en procédant sur cette base, la nécessité de donner satisfaction à toutes les exigences locales entraînera le remaniement des limites géographiques actuelles des différents vilayets.

La Porte ne saurait d'ailleurs s'autoriser des délais qu'entraîneront les opérations du recensement projeté pour ajourner l'exécution des mesures présentant un caractère d'urgence.

Il est de toute nécessité de réaliser, sans perte de temps, les réformes destinées à garantir la vie et la propriété des Arméniens; de prendre immédiatement des mesures contre les incursions des Kurdes; d'appliquer sans délai la nouvelle combinaison financière, de mettre provisoirement la gendarmerie sur un pied plus satisfaisant; de donner surtout aux Gouverneurs-Généraux un pouvoir plus stable et une responsabilité plus étendue.

Les Soussignés, à titre de conclusion, appellent une fois de plus l'attention de la Porte sur ce fait essentiel, que les réformes à introduire dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens doivent, aux termes des engagements qu'elle a contractés par un Acte international, être conformes aux besoins locaux, et s'accomplir sous la surveillance des Puissances.

Les Soussignés, &c. (Signé) HATZFELDT.
NOVIKOW.
GOSCHEN.
CORTI.
TISSOT.
CALICE.

TABLEAU Comparatif de la Population Mixte dans les Six Vilayets.

	Erzeroum.	Van (Moncle Bitlis).	Sivas.	Kharpout.	Diarbékir.	Alep.	Totals.	Totals.	Total Général.
Arméniens—									
Arméniens	110,000	250,000	40,000	140,000	20,000	60,000	700,000		
Arméniens Catholiques	10,000	2,000	10,000	5,000	8,000	10,000	45,000		
,, Protestants	1,000	500	2,000	10,000	500	500	14,500		
,, Grecs	..	..	..	3,000	..	..	3,000		
,, Alévis Kizilbach ..	10,000	..	5,000	..	..	..	15,000		
,, Paulcis	3,000	..	..	..	..	..	3,000		
	134,000	252,500	57,000	158,000	33,500	90,500	..	750,500	
Grec —									
Grecs	5,000	..	5,000	2,000	5,000	..	17,000		
,, Catholiques	..	..	..	..	..	6,000	6,000		
	5,000	..	5,000	2,000	5,000	6,000	..	23,000	
Syriens—									
Syriens Nestoriens	..	85,000	..	5,000	40,000	40,000	170,000		
,, Catholiques	..	..	..	..	15,000	66,000	81,000		
	..	85,000	..	5,000	55,000	106,000	..	251,000	1,051,500
Turcs—									
Turcs	50,000	20,000	50,000	60,000	10,000	80,000	270,000		
Circassiens	10,000	..	15,000	10,000	15,000	..	50,000		
	60,000	20,000	65,000	70,000	25,000	80,000	..	320,000	
Métis—									
Yezidis	..	20,000	..	..	5,000	..	25,000		
Tahtaguiens	10,000	..	..	5,000	..	5,000	20,000		
Khilibach	..	..	..	15,000	15,000	..	30,000		
Juifs	..	1,500	..	..	..	..	1,500		
	10,000	21,500	..	20,000	20,000	5,000	..	76,500	
Nomades—									
Kurdes Zazas	60,000	70,000	15,000	30,000	..	15,000	190,000		
,, Alévis	..	..	..	10,000	40,000	..	50,000		
,, Arabes	..	..	..	..	30,000	10,000	70,000		
,, Afchars	..	..	..	..	..	10,000	10,000		
,, Bédouins Fahris	..	10,000	..	..	..	..	10,000		
Turcomans	..	..	..	..	..	20,000	20,000		
	60,000	110,000	15,000	40,000	70,000	85,000	..	380,000	
									770,500
									1,831,300

No. 89.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 52.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 22, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 600 of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch in regard to the brigandage case at Bogaz Kessen, near Van.

I have called the attention of the Sublime Porte to the inaccuracy of the official version published in the Constantinople newspapers on the 7th ultimo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 89.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, January* 11, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 14th December, 1894, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a further despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, calling attention to an official statement which was published in the Constantinople newspapers on the 7th ultimo on the subject of the brigandage case at Bogaz Kessen, near Van.

Mr. Hallward points out that none of the foreign Consular officers at Van have interfered, or been asked to interfere, in any way in this matter, and states that his colleagues, as well as himself, object strongly to the use made of their names in a public official statement in connection with such an affair.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 89.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, December* 27, 1894.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 27th ultimo, I beg leave to call your attention to an official statement which was published in the Constantinople papers of the 7th instant on the subject of the affair reported in the first part of that despatch.

It will be seen that the two telegrams in the inclosure are vague and contradictory; the first says that six brigands were captured alive and that the rest escaped; the second that, out of a total of twenty, six escaped and fourteen were captured, including those who supplied the brigands with food, &c.; it is not stated how many of these fourteen were brigands and how many accomplices, but in any case there still remain some brigands unaccounted for, their total number having been said to be twenty. The report mentioned in the first telegram that three brigands were killed was apparently unfounded, as nothing is said about them in the second.

As a matter of fact, the Vali said sometime back, in the course of a conversation at which I was present, that they had failed to catch or kill any of the brigands, which I believe to be true, as I reported in my former despatch. I also believe it to be a fact, as I reported before, and is asserted by all classes outside the Government, that the brigands were Kurds and not Armenians. The villages in question, Bogaz Kessen and Hazira, are Armenian villages, and the sheep that were stolen belonged to Armenians of those villages. It seems, therefore, on the face of it unlikely that Armenian patriots would come over from Persia and join with Armenian villagers in killing their fellow-villagers and stealing their sheep.

From thirty-five to forty Armenians are now in prison charged with being implicated in this affair, though only fourteen are mentioned in the telegram as having been arrested.

What I would specially beg to call your attention to is the concluding statement of the inclosure, viz., that the trial of these prisoners is proceeding before the eyes of the Consuls, the intended inference obviously being that there can be no suspicion of unfairness, as the Consuls have had the opportunity of verifying the facts for themselves. In the first place, the trial has not yet begun; the prisoners are simply undergoing a preliminary examination, at which neither a Consul nor any one else not immediately concerned can be present; and, in the second place, even if we were present at the trial, it is very doubtful whether we should be in a position to arrive at the truth, as in criminal trials of this sort the whole case is usually prepared at the preliminary secret examination, and prisoners are either intimidated by ill-treatment or induced by promises to give such evidence as is required by the authorities. The chief agents here in such affairs are Emin Effendi, the Procureur-Général, and Nouri Effendi, Chief of

Police, both corrupt men of the lowest character, but exercising great influence in the Government; what they will evolve out of the present case remains to be seen, but in the meantime neither of my colleagues, the Persian Consul-General nor the Russian Acting Vice-Consul, any more than myself, has interfered in any way in it, and they both agree with me in objecting strongly to the use made of their names in a public official statement in connection with such a business.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

Inclosure 3 in No. 89.

Extract from Constantinople Newspaper of November 25 (*December* 7), 1894.

(Translation.)

Copy of a Telegram sent from the Van Vilayet to the Minister of the Interior, dated November 5 (17), 1894.

NEWS having been received a few days ago from the head zaptieh who was patrolling the village of Hazira, in the nahié of Archag, that a band of brigands of unknown origin had carried off the sheep of the village, and that in an encounter which took place one zaptieh and three of the population were killed, and that another zaptieh was wounded, the Head of the Gendarmerie was sent with zaptiehs to apprehend them.

The Head of the Gendarmerie reports that on approaching the village of Bogaz Kessen they heard that some brigands were hidden in the caves of Akhta Dag, and that they surrounded the place and called on them to surrender, but the brigands fired on them and killed a corporal; that six of them were captured alive, and that it is said, but not yet known for certain, that three more were killed; that night having then come on with a heavy snowstorm pursuit was impossible, and the rest of the brigands escaped; that they are still, however, being pursued, and that they are Armenians in Kurdish disguise.

The Assistant Procureur-Général has been sent to make an inquiry, and further information will be given on his report.

Copy of a Telegram from the Van Vilayet to the Grand Vizier, November 15 (27), 1894.

The Assistant Procureur-Général was sent to inquire into the occurrence reported in my telegram of the 5th November, and reports as follows:—

The brigands in question consisted of twenty Armenians armed with new guns. Six of them belonged to the Armenian Patriotic Association, and had already been condemned for former crimes, and had escaped to Persia, and the rest of them were from Van and the villages of Bogaz Kessen and Hazira. The six, thanks to the darkness and the violent snowstorm, escaped back to Persia, and the rest to their homes. Those of the villagers who are known to have taken part in the affair, and the persons who supplied arms, food, &c., to the brigands while they were hiding on Akhta Dag were fourteen in number. They have been arrested, and an inquiry has been begun respecting them.

The brigands mentioned in these telegrams are being photographed, and their trial is being conducted on the spot in an open manner, and before the eyes of the Consuls, and it is therefore evident that the truth will come to light under the auspices of the justice-loving Sultan.

No. 90.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 58.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 22, 1895.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 2 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her

Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the desirability of the evidence of certain officers being called for by the Commission of Inquiry.

I have endeavoured to discover and communicate with Edhem Pasha, but so far without success.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 90.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, January 7, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's telegram of the 6th instant, to which I replied by telegraph the same day.

I think that the evidence of the officers mentioned in my Confidential despatch of the 6th November, 1894, should be called for by the European Delegates with the Commission of Inquiry, but that this should be done only after evidence has been taken that excesses were really committed by the troops, in order that the responsibility for what occurred may be fixed. The evidence on this last point of Edhem Pasha, if he has not been influenced to conceal or distort the truth, should be conclusive. That officer, as I reported at the time, went from Erzeroum to Constantinople about two months ago, and I have no knowledge of his subsequent movements.

As instructed in your Excellency's telegram, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of my despatch of the 6th November.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 90.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, January 7, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 10th September last, in which mention was made of the proceedings of a certain Mehemet (Mami) Pasha in the Bashkala district, I have the honour to report that that worthy was offered a village by the Government in the Nordul district, east of Van, but at some distance from the frontier, instead of the Armenian village of Arrag, in which he had established himself for a year past. Not being satisfied with the proposal of the Government, on the approach of winter he returned to Persia, whence he had previously fled from justice.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 91.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 54.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 22, 1895.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 14 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the sentences passed upon the Armoudan prisoners.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 91.

Consul-Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, January 5, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 23rd March, 1894, and previous despatches, I have the honour to report that I learn from private sources that the Armoudan prisoners at Erzingian were lately brought to trial in that town, and that the proceedings were terminated in a single day. Out of fifty prisoners only four were acquitted, while twenty-one were sentenced to 101 years penal servitude ("kyurek"), and the remainder to terms of imprisonment varying from three to fifteen years.

Hadji Caloust Halkan Oghlou, with his companions, and Dr. Pachaian, who formed the subject of inquiry in Sir A. Nicolson's despatch of the 24th August, 1893, were among those sentenced to penal servitude for 101 years.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 92.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 55.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 22, 1895.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 268 of the 31st December last, in which I announced the resignation of Dhuri Pasha, I have the honour to state that Raouf Pasha, formerly Vali of Syria (Damascus), has been appointed Vali of Mamouret-ul-Aziz (Kharput).

Raouf Pasha, who was for a long period Mutessarif of Jerusalem, was made Vali of Bitlis, but, owing to representations made by foreign Embassies after the Moussa Bey case, the Valis of Erzeroum, Van, and Bitlis were subsequently changed. He is a good Governor, and when at Bitlis acquired a reputation for energy and integrity.

He is of a somewhat advanced age.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 93.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 56. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 22, 1895.*

MR. ELIOT called this morning upon the Armenian Patriach in order to receive any observations which he might have to offer on my notes as to Armenian reforms.

I inclose a Memorandum which he has drawn up embodying his Beatitude's remarks.

M. Izmirlian takes generally a favourable view of my suggestions, but attaches especial importance to the appointments of all the provincial officials being made by the Valis and not by the Porte. He also laid much stress on the measures to be taken for restraining the Kurds.

In the course of a conversation I had with my Russian colleague on the 20th instant, I found that he was favourable to the appointment of Christian Mutessarifs and Kaïmakams in the sandjaks and cazas, where the Christians are in a majority, but that he saw great practical difficulties in the way of making the nomination of the Valis subject to the assent of the Powers. He would propose to insist on measures being taken to put the Hamidié regiments under stricter discipline and control.

I have some reason to believe that M. Cambon is preparing a scheme of reforms, but I have no knowledge of the direction it is likely to take.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 93.

Memorandum by Mr. Eliot.

THE Armenian Patriarch gave me verbally this morning his observations on your Excellency's suggestions respecting reforms in Armenia.

With regard to the appointment of Valis, he said that he quite understood that it might be inconvenient for political reasons to introduce too great changes in the existing organization of the Armenian provinces, but he wished to record his solemn conviction that the only arrangement which could give permanent satisfaction would be the appointment of a Christian and, if possible, of an Armenian Governor. In any case, he considered it most important that the Powers should take part in the choice of the Governor, and that the Porte should not be able to dismiss him without their consent.

With regard to the Council-General intrusted with the control of the finances, he thought it very important that some regulation should be made as to the proportion of the finances to be remitted to Constantinople and that to be spent on local requirements. He was convinced that one of the chief evils of the present system was the insufficiency of money for public purposes in the vilayet; officials were ludicrously under paid, and justice and good administrations were things which cannot be bought cheap.

With regard to the Mutessarif Kaïmakams and Mudirs, he considered it of the utmost importance that they should be named by the Vali and not from Constantinople. Under the present system they are named by the central authority, receive private instructions, and are often encouraged to maintain an independent and insubordinate attitude. In order that the appointment of a good Vali should produce the desired result, it was essential that he should be responsible for the state of the vilayet, and choose the officials for executing his orders. Otherwise, the Sublime Porte might appoint a series of anti-Armenian Mutessarifs and Kaïmakams who would render ineffectual the efforts of the Vali approved by the Powers. His Beatitude insisted strongly on this point, and stated he considered it as the most important observation he had to offer.

Similarly he thought that Judges should be appointed by the Vali with the assistance of the Council-General. With regard to the Court of Assize, composed of two Christians and two Mussulmans, he said that he knew travelling Judges were an English institution, but that, though the idea was new to him, he did not regard it unfavourably. He regretted, however, that your Excellency had said nothing about revising the ordinary Courts of First Instance and Appeal. He fully accepted the arrangement by which the proportion of Mahommedan and Christian functionaries was regulated by the number of persons in the sandjak, caza, or nahié professing each religion, and would desire to see this principle employed in selecting Judges.

Finally, he spoke at some length of the Kurdish question, and continually referred to the collective note of the 7th September, 1880, as expressing his views on the matter. His opinion seemed to be that the Kurds, being nomads, ought to be neglected in estimating the population of a vilayet; and that, for establishing the proportion of Christians and Mahommedans, only the sedentary population ought to be taken into consideration. He spoke bitterly of the Hamidieh cavalry, and said that, if it was necessary in 1880 to take special measures for protecting the Armenians against the Kurds, it was doubly necessary now when the Government had deliberately armed their oppressors. He had no objection to seeing the regular troops strengthened if the authorities could only be induced to use them to suppress Kurdish lawlessness. He thought it essential that there should be no Kurds in the gendarmerie, but spoke with high approval of the plan for representing other Mussulmans and Christians on that body in proportion to their numbers. He observed that it was most important that this proportional representation should extend to the smallest administrative units, so that purely Christian nahiés should have a purely Christian gendarmerie.

(Signed) C. N. E. ELIOT.

No. 94.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 60. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January 23, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 484, Confidential, of the 19th October, and further correspondence (No. 560) respecting disturbances at Tokat, consequent on the alleged robbery by Armenians of the Turkish mail, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith translations of letters received from that town which have been communicated to me from an Armenian source.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 94.

Letters received from Tokat.

Le 21 Août, 1894.

DANS la matinée de Jeudi, 4 Août, Chevki Effendi, Directeur de la Poste Impériale à Tokat, avait annoncé que le courrier de Bagdad-Constantinople s'arrêtant à Tokat recevrait des correspondances jusqu'au soir de la même journée. Cette décision était tout à fait extraordinaire, car le Directeur de la Poste Impériale, ayant naturellement appris la veille le départ de celle-ci de Sivas, devait, suivant l'usage, annoncer la chose le Mercredi, 3 Août. Le Jeudi le courrier était naturellement arrivé, et, suivant le règlement au courrier, ne doit jamais s'arrêter plus de deux heures. Le Directeur de la Poste Impériale en retenant le courrier jusqu'au soir du Jeudi, 4 Août, a donc agi contrairement aux usages, ainsi qu'aux prescriptions du règlement.

Un fait encore digne de remarque:—

M. Toros Ghazarian, représentant de la maison Gulbenkian à Tokat, auquel s'adresse presque toujours le Contrôleur ("Mouhassébedjé") de Tokat pour acheter des traites payables à Constantinople au Trésor Impérial, propose le même jour au Gouvernement de vendre des traites pour le même courrier. Le Mouhassébedjé refuse d'acheter, disant qu'on préférait envoyer, pour cette fois, l'argent en groupe. Le négociant accepte d'indemniser des frais d'emballage le Gouvernement si son offre est agréée. On répond par un refus formel.

Un troisième cas digne de remarque:—

C'est un usage consacré par le règlement de faire accompagner le courrier, même ne contenant que des lettres simples, d'une escorte de quatre à dix gendarmes à cheval, tandis que cette fois-ci le courrier, malgré les 150,000 piastres destinées au Trésor, et des groupes appartenant à des particuliers de la même valeur, n'a été accompagné que de deux cavaliers Tcherkess.

L'un de ces Tcherkess ayant prétexté sa maladie pour ne pas accompagner le courrier, le Chef de la Police lui avait enjoint d'aller quelques lieux afin de ne pas contrevenir à l'ordre reçu. Le Tcherkess étant en effet retourné, c'est avec un seul gendarme et un courrier ("tatar") que la voiture de poste est partie le soir, vers le tard, de Tokat.

Le Gouvernement a à Tokat plus de vingt cavaliers toujours prêts pour le départ; il est étonnant qu'on ait agi avec si peu de prudence.

Les fonctionnaires de Tokat, qui commettent les cavaliers aux services les plus dégradants, tels que leur porter des boissons alcooliques aux vignes, où ils organisent des partis de plaisir, &c., sont impardonnables d'avoir si légèrement comportés dans ce cas.

Dans la matinée de Vendredi, 5 Août, le bruit a couru à Tokat que le courrier avait essuyé une attaque et avait été dépouillé près les villages Musulmans Vaeron et Gumedj, à une heure et demie de distance de Tokat. On affirmait que l'argent du Trésor avait été enlevé, et que le sac contenant les groupes avait été déchiré, mais que son contenu avait été laissé intact. On disait aussi que des bruits d'armes à feu avaient été entendus des villages susmentionnés, et que les villageois qui avaient couru dans la direction de ces bruits avaient trouvé le "tatar" blessé et la voiture de poste laissée sans garde sur le chemin.

L'enquête du Gouvernement avait prouvé, disait-on, en même temps que le Tcherkess malade, au lieu de revenir auprès de ses chefs pour les renseigner de son retour, et pour laisser son cheval dans le dépôt de la cavalerie, comme c'était son devoir, n'avait jamais donné signe de vie de toute la nuit, et qu'à son retour l'examen médical avait prouvé qu'il n'avait

aucune maladie de nature à l'empêcher d'accompagner le courrier. Suivant les clameurs basées sur les paroles du seul cavalier ayant accompagné le courrier, quelques bandits s'étant tout d'un coup rués sur la voiture de poste auraient blessé le cheval, le courrier ayant cru prudent de s'enfuir, aurait, après s'être éloigné du lieu du désastre, commencé à tirer des coups de fusil, et serait venu à Tokat informer le Gouvernement.

Dans la nuit de Vendredi et le lendemain matin la police a fait cerner par ses agents les principales artères et les entrées de la ville. Le bruit court qu'un villageois Turc est venu déclarer au Gouvernement qu'il a vu cinq ou six brigands ourdis fuir en toute hâte du côté de Gouana, et par devant Ouzoun-Bouroun, mais le Directeur de Police, quoique ayant affirmé que ces brigands se trouvaient depuis quelques temps dans ces lieux, aurait ajouté qu'il ne croyait pas qu'ils soient les auteurs de l'attaque du courrier, et ne les aurait nullement fait poursuivre.

Les renseignements susmentionnés prouvent que les faits dans cette regrettable affaire se sont passés d'une manière tout à fait contraire aux règlements et usages, et que les fonctionnaires du Gouvernement ont une bien grande part de responsabilité par suite de leur insouciance à exécuter textuellement le règlement. Sur la nouvelle de cette attaque les chefs de gendarmerie d'Amassia et de Sivas sont arrivés à Tokat, accompagnés de nombreuses escortes. On a assiégé les quartiers Arméniens de la ville, et les recherches les plus minutieuses ont eu lieu presque dans toutes les maisons. Les gendarmes entraient même, en l'absence du chef de la famille, dans les habitations, des parquets presque à cinque pas étaient démolis et les murs ouverts. La peur que les pauvres femmes, dont plusieurs enceintes, ont sentie, est indescriptible. Dans plusieurs habitations des bijoux et d'autres objets de valeur ont été enlevés. Des centaines d'enfants et de femmes sont devenus malades, par suite de la crainte qu'ils ont éprouvé. La ville a l'aspect d'un deuil général. Dans le quartier Rustem-Tchelébi la police, qui désirait faire des recherches dans une maison contiguë, entre par mégarde dans la maison du nommé Minass Ghorgodian. Le fils de celui-ci, Ohannes, âgé de 22 ans, est subitement mort sans qu'il soit aucunement malade, par suite de la peur qu'il a sentie et de la brutalité des agents de police. Des arrestations sur une grande échelle ont lieu. Les fonctionnaires du Gouvernement profitent des circonstances actuelles pour satisfaire des vengeances personnelles, ou pour donner libre cours à leur cupidité. Le nombre des prisonniers excède déjà les 2,000. Les prisons de la ville ne suffisant pas à les contenir des caravanserais (hans) et des écuries ont été louées pour servir de prison. En ce temps d'épidémie cet état de choses crée le plus grand danger pour la santé publique.

Ces prisonniers sont considérés comme de redoutables criminels ; on agit avec eux avec une parfaite cruauté. Les lits, nourritures, &c., envoyés par leurs familles sont souvent refusés ; on les martyrise par la faim ; on assure que les tortures les plus atroces ont lieu dans les prisons ; la pendaison par les pieds ou par le cou, la torture des fers rouges sont mise à l'exécution. On laisse par les moyens les plus barbares les prisonniers sans sommeil pendant deux ou trois jours, et on leur donne des coups de sabre et de lance. Dans la soirée de Samedi, 20 Août, vers 11 heures du soir, la police faisait des recherches dans le quartier Caya-Mahallé pour arrêter un suspect. Dans une bagarre qui a eu lieu à cette occasion un Arménien, ainsi que le Caporal Apoal Teharoueh, ayant été tués, le Gouvernement a envoyé des centaines de fantassins et de soldats d'infanterie sur les lieux. Des milliers d'habitants Turcs de la ville portant des armes de toute sorte, et des gourdins, se sont furieusement précipités sur le quartier avec les vociférations de "Tuons les Arméniens! exterminons-les! On a forcé les portes, violé les domiciles, et blessé nombre de pauvres femmes et enfants. Les balles pleuvaient de tous les côtés. Un Arménien, foudroyé par une balle, est tombé inanime. La horde furieuse a saccagé les maisons. Les méfaits commis sont désolamment indescriptibles

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Le 23 Août, 1894.

Le Samedi, 20 Août, à 11 heures et demie du soir, des agents de police et des soldats au nombre de 200 faisaient des recherches en vue de s'emparer des suspects en fuite quand, sur les instigations du Commandant de la Gendarmerie, Békir Bey, et de plusieurs autres personnes malveillantes, une horde de milliers de Turcs armée de fusils, pistolets, sabres, haches et s'est tout à coup précipitée sur le quartier Arménien.

Békir Bey avait crié à plusieurs reprises: "Allons tuez ces maudits guiaours (les infidèles)!" Cette horde a commis d'horribles ravages dans le quartier susmentionné ainsi que dans les quartiers environnants. Plusieurs personnes sont mortes par suite de blessures d'armes à feu et d'armes blanches, mais le nombre total des morts et blessés n'est pas encore connu.

Les maisons ont été saccagées, les portes enfoncées et des murs et toits démolis. Les pertes matérielles sont aussi très considérables. Les cris d'horreur et d'effroi des femmes et enfants du peuple étaient entendus de la ville entière. Les soldats qui avaient pour mission la protection des jeunes filles et des femmes se sont publiquement livrés à des actes de viol avec une barbarie et un cynisme inouis ; même les enfants en bas âge n'ont pas été épargnés. Dans le désordre général on entendait sans cesse des cris, "Tuons leurs mâles, violons leurs femelles et saccageons leurs biens," et ces menaces étaient mises en pratique au même instant.

Le nommé Guiragoss, barbier, qui était parmi les tués et plusieurs autres blessés ont été traînés dans les rues et portés au Palais du Gouverneur, qui, spectateur insoucieux de ces atroces crimes, semblait tacitement les encourager en emprisonnant les blessés sans aucune enquête et sans blâmer les fauteurs des désordres.

Plusieurs Arméniens qui se trouvaient accidentellement dans les rues par lesquelles la horde a passé ont été cruellement battus et les vitres des maisons des Arménien scassés par des pierres qu'on lançait.

Ces faits se sont répétés dans la soirée du 21 Août : plusieurs Arméniens se rendant à leurs vignes ou aux villages ont été brutalement battus et l'argent ainsi que les objets de valeurs qu'ils avaient sur eux ont été volés. Dans la ville même ces faits sont devenus coutumiers ; les Arméniens, par suite de leur terreur, n'osent pas ouvrir leurs magasins depuis plusieurs jours.

L'enquête à laquelle le Gouvernement et l'autorité ecclésiastique se sont livrée quoique encore bien imparfaite montre que les quartiers où ces atrocités se sont passées ont pris l'aspect de ruines et d'infirmerie : il y est fréquent de voir des maisons où il existe de huit à dix malades.

L'autorité ecclésiastique Arménienne a voulu télégraphier ces faits le 23 Août au Palais Impérial et au Patriarcat, mais le bureau télégraphique ayant annoncé la chose au Vali, au lieu de transmettre le télégramme, son Excellence Halil Bey qui était arrivé la nuit même à Tcakat a fait reprendre le télégramme transmis jusqu'à Sivas en promettant de faire le nécessaire. La copie du télégramme que le bureau télégraphique de Sivas avait remise à son Excellence et que Halil Bey a retournée à l'autorité ecclésiastique est gardée dans les bureaux de l'Evêché Arménien.

Halil Bey a fait emprisonner aujourd'hui quelques personnes et le soir il a fait mettre en liberté les Arméniens blessés que la horde avait amené au Palais du Gouvernement et fait emprisonner. Mais des centaines d'Arméniens arrêtés sur de simples prescriptions restent toujours sous les verrous.

Le 7 Septembre, 1894.

A la suite des incidents du 20 et 21 Août à Tokat plus de 200 personnes parmi lesquelles des jeunes filles et des adolescents de 14 et 15 ans et plusieurs vieillards ont été jetés en prison sans aucune enquête sérieuse. Il est avéré que les faits les plus scandaleux au point de vue de la moralité se passent journellement dans les cachots sans que ceux qui osent attenter à l'honneur des prisonniers soient punis. Les recherches que la police fait, sous prétexte de chercher des suspects en fuite dans les quartiers habités par les Arméniens sont exécutées de la manière la plus arbitraire et avec des procédés les plus cruels.

Les agents de police profitant de ce prétexte prennent des libertés impardonnables avec les jeunes femmes et les vierges habitant les maisons où ils font des descentes. Briser les portes des maisons dont les habitants se sont momentanément absentés, ouvrir caisses, coffres, &c., parfois faire leur butin sont choses communes pour eux. L'autorité ecclésiastique de Tokat a voulu télégraphier au Palais Impérial et au Patriarcat les détails des incidents susmentionnés le lendemain même des faits.

Mais le Vali de Sivas qui s'était empressé de venir militairement de Sivas à Tokat a ordonné de ne pas télégraphier, promettant de punir les coupables et de faire justice. Plus tard le Patriarcat Arménien de Constantinople ayant par un télégramme demandé des renseignements l'autorité ecclésiastique de Tokat a de nouveau demandé à télégraphier, mais une nouvelle défense du Gouverneur-Général l'a obligé de garder le silence. Le Secrétaire de l'évêché qui par suite de sa fonction, avait rédigé le second télégramme, a été emprisonné de ce chef.

Les membres du Conseil Ecclésiastique de Tokat au nombre de cinq ont été emprisonnés pour avoir signé ce télégramme. Il paraît que c'est le même motif qui a conduit le Gouvernement à faire aussi emprisonner les deux membres du Conseil laïque qui avaient également donné leur signature.

Le prêtre Der Mavdivotz, l'un des desservants de l'Église Arménienne Saint-Étienne (Sourpe Stépannos) à Tokat a été emprisonné sous l'inculpation d'avoir fait chanter dans l'église des chansons dont les strophes contiendraient des paroles nuisibles à la sûreté de l'État (?) ; il y a plusieurs arrestations sous les prétextes de la même futilité.

Dans la nuit du 5 Septembre (v. s.) vingt-deux prisonniers Arméniens portant des chaînes ont été précipitamment envoyés à Angora sous la conduite d'une nombreuse escorte de gendarmes ; leurs familles n'ayant pas été avisées, ces prisonniers n'ont pas pu même se procurer les effets d'habillements les plus indispensables. A la suite de ces incidents le Vali avait fait annoncer par crieur public à la population Turque qu'il était désormais défendu aux gens du peuple de participer aux recherches de la police. Cette mesure n'a eu aucune conséquence pratique ; ainsi le Jeudi, 8 Septembre, au matin, quand la police allait faire une nouvelle recherche dans le quartier où avaient eu lieu les incidents du 20 Août, des milliers de Turcs ont accompagné les agents de police et se sont précipités avec eux dans les habitations où les plus graves méfaits se sont produits ; pour ne citer qu'un seul cas : une femme Arménienne qui avait été précipité des escaliers de la maison et battue avec une violence inouïe est morte des blessures qu'elle avait reçues.

Dans les villages environnants la ville les mêmes faits de cruauté ont journellement lieu : des centaines d'agents de police visitent ces villages et sous prétexte qu'ils donnent asile à des fuyards agissent avec la dernière sévérité avec les habitants. Les greniers sont ouverts de force pour obtenir gratuitement les pitances des chevaux de ces gendarmes, et les meilleurs moutons de leurs troupeaux sont accaparés pour leur servir de nourriture. Les agents fixent en outre des rançons pour chaque paysan ayant quelques biens et dans le cas où ceux-ci osent d'en refuser le paiement ils les enchaînent et envoient à la ville sous l'accusation d'avoir abrité des fuyards en les battant avec cruauté pendant tout le trajet.

La conduite indolente du Gouvernement Local encourage tacitement tous ces méfaits.

Le 20 Septembre, 1894.

Les vingt-deux prisonniers qu'on avait fait partir sous une nombreuse escorte dans la nuit de 5 Septembre n'ont pas été envoyé à Angora ou à Sivas comme on l'avait d'abord cru. On va les ramener à Tokat et on assure que leur procès aura lieu ici.

Le Gouverneur-Général, dupe des rapports mensongers de quelques malveillants, se dit absolument certain de leur culpabilité. Il est impossible de le faire revenir sur cette conviction. Les Arméniens de Tokat affirment au contraire que ces prisonniers sont innocents. Son Excellence déclare à corps et à cris que les incidents de Tokat ont eu lieu par la connaissance de la communauté entière : il est tout naturel qu'elle tâchera de donner au procès une suite conforme à ses déclarations et aux rapports qu'elle a adressé à la Sublime Porte.

Dans les villages environnants de Tokat les plus graves méfaits se succèdent : les gendarmes envoyés à la recherche des fuyards se livrent à toute espèce de méfaits dûs à l'impunité.

Le Gouvernement a fait faire, il y a déjà quelques temps, des perquisitions dans l'église Arménienne des quarante enfants et dans le cimetière attenant à cette église. On a exhumé apparemment, dans l'espoir de trouver des armes et munitions dans leurs tombeaux ; mais rien n'ayant été trouvé les agents de police ont dû retourner bredouille à leur honte.

Le 23 Septembre, 1894.

Les vingt-deux prisonniers Arméniens sont arrivés aujourd'hui à Tokat. Leur procès aura lieu devant la Commission d'Enquête honnêtement et ayant pour but unique la recherche de la stricte vérité. Il est hors de doute que l'injustice criarde des procédés de l'autorité locale sera prouvée ; mais il est grandement à craindre que le Gouverneur-Général voudra inspirer les membres de la dite Commission de ses convictions.

Il est de l'intérêt de son Excellence ainsi que de tous les fonctionnaires du Gouvernement Local de montrer les choses suivant leur point de vue, car si l'on prouvait la vérité ils ne pourraient se sauver de la plus grande responsabilité.

Le 1er Décembre, 1894.

La terreur continue ici. Les fonctionnaires du Gouvernement agissent toujours avec brutalité envers les Arméniens. Depuis quelques semaines le Vali, par des propositions directes et par des menaces, demande aux Arméniens de signer un télégramme qui serait adressé au Palais Impérial. Il n'y a eu que de rares personnes qui ont montré des dispositions pour signer ce télégramme. L'immense majorité des Arméniens ayant répondu par un refus formel aux avances du Gouverneur-Général, le projet a échoué. Voici la traduction littérale du dit télégramme :—

"Nous avonous que l'attaque du courrier de Tokat ainsi que le vol commis chez le nommé Hadji Moustapha ont pour auteurs des criminels Arméniens. Nous avouons que les crimes et méfaits commis depuis quelques temps dans ces parages et partout ailleurs sont dus aux comités de criminels Arméniens dont les membres, sous le nom de patriotes, se sont révoltés contre l'autorité Impériale. Nous déclarons n'avoir aucune relation avec ces criminels. Nous réitérons l'assurance de notre fidélité envers le Gouvernement Impérial, et nous le prions de punir avec la dernière sévérité ces criminels. Ces punitions augmenteront les titres de notre gratitude envers le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté. Nous croyons de notre devoir de déclarer aussi que la conduite du Gouvernement envers les Arméniens continue d'être empreinte de la plus grande justice et bienveillance. Aussi faisons-nous des vœux pour la conservation des jours précieux de notre bien-aimé Souverain."

Le 16 Décembre, 1894.

La situation est la même. Les tortures continuent dans les prisons. Le Gouvernement enfin laisse libres le prêtre Der-Khatchadour, emprisonné par suite de l'inimitié personnelle du Caïmacam d'Azizié, le prêtre Der-Yeghiché de Tokat, également emprisonné sans cause justifiée, et les quelques co-accusés de ceux-ci. Le prêtre Der-Khatchadour a eu sept mois de prison préventive et le prêtre Der-Yeghiché cinq mois. D'autres arrestations ont eu lieu. Une jeune femme Arménienne avec son enfant de six mois est aussi emprisonnée de même que son mari Boghoss Kenchéyan pour l'unique cause qu'il avait reçu son éducation à l'école des Américains de Marsovan.

No. 95.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 63.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 24, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 554 of the 1st December, I have the honour to report that the Greek Protestant community at Ordou, having consented to change the site of their church as a concession to the susceptibilities of the Orthodox Greek party, are anxious to obtain permission to open a school in their parsonage.

Many difficulties were raised to this proposal, but in consequence of the representations of Her Majesty's Embassy the Grand Vizier has now, as I am assured, telegraphed categorical orders to Ordou instructing the local authorities to allow the school to be opened as desired.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 96.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 64. Secret.)
My Lord, *Pera, January 24, 1895.*

M. MOSDITCHIAN, the Secretary of the Armenian Patriarch, called upon me this morning, and gave me, in strict confidence, an account of two interviews which his Beatitude had had with Munir Bey, one of the Sultan's Secretaries. Munir Bey said that he was instructed by the Sultan to inquire as to any complaints which the Patriarch might have to make on behalf of the Armenians. His Majesty considered that such matters concerned only the internal administration of the Ottoman Empire, and should be dealt with directly between the Patriarch and himself, without reference to any other

quarter. He therefore invited his Beatitude to state his case to him, and would himself give redress in any matters that might require it. The Patriarch replied that the grievances of the Armenian people might be summed up under three heads. The first was that of religious liberty. With regard to this point he referred to the violation of churches and the desecration of the sacred vessels. It had become the habit to search the churches for arms, and this was now done without giving any notice to the ecclesiastical authorities, and with excessive violence. Religious publications had also been interfered with. He cited the names of two martyrs who had fallen in the wars with Persia, and were dignified with the title of "General." The military rank of these martyrs had been struck out of the Calendar by the Censor.

The same authority had endeavoured to strike out of the Prayer Book passages in which words that were thought objectionable occurred, and exception had even been taken to the phrase, "Thy Kingdom come," in the Lord's Prayer.

Secondly, as regards the privileges granted by Mehemet the Conqueror to the Armenians, and eventually embodied in the Armenian Constitution of 1861, they had been repeatedly set aside. Churches and schools had been interfered with, and priests were cast into prison and tried without any communication with the ecclesiastical authorities. The complaints of former Patriarchs had been met with promises that these grievances should be redressed, but those promises had not been kept.

Thirdly, the Patriarch referred to the outrages which were perpetrated on the people, and especially to the fact that the prisons were full of Armenians, who, if guilty, should be punished, if innocent, should be released. He demanded that charges brought against the judicial authorities should be examined.

Munir Bey undertook to report the Patriarch's observations to the Sultan, and returned on the following day with His Majesty's reply.

He stated that the Sultan was shocked and grieved at the complaints of desecration in the churches and violation of religious vessels. Orders had been given to prevent any such occurrences in future. No allusion was made to the other subjects of complaint, but more details were asked for. The Patriarch replied that he had not had time fully to study the questions to which he had referred, but that as soon as he had been able to do so he would make a communication *in extenso*. It was understood that Munir Bey would call to receive the communication shortly.

The Patriarch expressed an earnest desire that the fact of his having made the above communication to me should be kept secret.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 97.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 35.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 29, 1895, 10·30 A.M.*

MR. SHIPLEY, the British Delegate on the Bitlis Commission, telegraphed to me yesterday from Moush that he had received on the 24th instant a communication from American missionaries at Bitlis according to which the situation in that town had become intolerable; the whole of the Christian population was completely terrorized by the Vali, and the people were being forced to sign a statement incriminating Mr. Hallward and the missionaries for having stirred up the whole matter from when it began two years ago; the trial of the imprisoned Armenian Notables was being rapidly pushed forward.

Mr. Shipley added that he had no means of controlling these statements, but it would appear that the Vali is desperate, and from the evident fear and reluctance of the Christian population of Moush to approach the Delegates on the Commission, he is inclined to think that there is little, if any, exaggeration in the account given by the missionaries; the latter conclude their communication by expressing fears as to their own personal safety.

No. 98.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 36.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 29, 1895, 10·30 A.M.*

IT has been notified to the Delegates that the Vali of Bitlis has been dismissed.

No. 99.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 45.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 29, 1895.*

I NOTICE that the despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, inclosed in your Excellency's despatch No. 16 of the 8th instant, refers to a rumoured intention on the part of the Turkish Government to settle Circassian immigrants in the eastern district of the Sandjak of Hekkiari.

Her Majesty's Government trust that there is no ground for the report in question.

The evil results which attend the introduction of Circassian immigrants in districts inhabited by Christians are sufficiently well known from past experience, and if any further trustworthy information should reach you to the effect that this measure is seriously contemplated in the Hekkiari districts, it will be right that you should make representation to the Porte earnestly deprecating such a proceeding.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 100.

Foreign Office to Evangelical Alliance.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 29, 1895.*

I AM directed by the Earl of Kimberley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, drawing attention to the difficulties placed by the Turkish authorities in the way of the freedom of religious worship, and to the ill-treatment of Christians in the Asiatic provinces.

I am to state that this communication will receive his Lordship's careful attention.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 101.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 30.)

(No. 37.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 30, 1895, 12·5 P.M.*

I HAVE addressed an official note to the Porte asking to be supplied with exact information as to the nature of restrictions which it is proposed to put upon the Treaty rights of British subjects, in consequence of the Porte having refused permission to British newspaper correspondents and others to make journeys in certain portions of Asia Minor while the Sassoon inquiry continues.

No. 102.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 30.)

(No. 39.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 30, 1895, 2·30 P.M.*

SAID PASHA, before I had sent off the note referred to in my telegram to your Lordship No. 37, sent for Mr. Block, and requested that I would recall Major Barlow, R.A., and the correspondent of the "Graphic," who have both arrived at Trebizond.

Mr. Block informed the Foreign Minister that this was impossible, upon which his Excellency stated that, except as regards the Vilayet of Bitlis, the prohibition against travelling would be withdrawn.

The following official communication was then made to Mr. Block by Saïd Pasha :—

"As a temporary and exceptional administrative measure, the Ottoman Government has decided that, until the Commission of Inquiry has completed its labours, no travellers shall be allowed to visit the Vilayet of Bitlis; travellers visiting other parts of Asia Minor will be given the usual escorts when necessary."

In view of this communication I suspended the despatch of my note.

No. 103.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir F. Lascelles.

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January* 30, 1895.

HER Majesty's Government have reason to believe that refugees from the Sassoon district have passed over the Turkish frontier in considerable numbers into Russian territory.

Inquire of the Russian Government whether arrangements can be made to examine these refugees respecting the events which took place at Sassoon.

It is very probable that the witnesses cited before the Turkish Commission of Inquiry will shrink from giving true evidence from fear of consequences.

No. 104.

Professor Tchéraz to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 31.)

Milord, 33, *De Vere Gardens, London, ce* 30 *Janvier,* 1895.

JE suis chargé par la Colonie Arménienne de Varna de communiquer à votre Seigneurie le Protocole ci-inclus, signé par son Chef Spirituel, le Révérend Père Ohan Mantagouni, et contenant les Résolutions d'un meeting tenu dans cette ville le 20 du courant. Ces Résolutions ont été également votées par les Colonies Arméniennes établies dans d'autres villes de la Bulgarie, qui m'ont adressé les télégrammes suivants :—

"*Dobritch, 22 Janvier.*

"Réunis aujourd'hui en meeting environ 500 personnes, nous donnons notre complète adhésion aux Résolutions prises par le meeting de Varna, tenu le 20 du courant, protestant contre la formation de la Commission d'Enquête, et insistant sur l'application, sans autre préambule de l'Article LXI du Traité de Berlin.

"Le Président du Meeting,
(Signé) "AVÉDIS MARDIROSSIAN."

"*Radné-Mahallé, 24 Janvier.*

"Réunis en meeting, nous donnons notre parfaite adhésion aux Résolutions protestant contre la mesure de l'enquête du Sassoun, et demandant l'application sans retard des réformes promises.

"Le Président du Meeting,
(Signé) "GUENDJO MÉLIK."

"*Stralidja, 24 Janvier.*

"Réunis en meeting, nous donnons notre parfaite adhésion aux Résolutions protestant contre la mesure de l'enquête du Sassoun, et demandant l'application sans retard des réformes promises.

"Le Président du Meeting,
(Signé) "MOURAD HAZARossIAN."

"*Carnabat, 24 Janvier.*

"Réunis en meeting, nous donnons notre parfaite adhésion aux Résolutions protestant contre la mesure de l'enquête du Sassoun, et demandant l'application sans retard des réformes promises.

"Le Président du Meeting,
(Signé) "ARAKEL NERSESSIAN."

"*Huskova, 26 Janvier.*

"Le meeting de Kayadjik, 24 du courant, protestant contre la mesure de l'enquête du Sassoun, et demandant l'application sans retard des réformes promises, a notre parfaite adhésion.

"Le Président du Meeting,
(Signé) "SARKIS MARDIROSSIAN."

"*Sliveo, 27 Janvier.*

"Réunis en meeting, nous donnons notre parfaite adhésion aux Résolutions protestant contre la mesure de l'enquête du Sassoun, et demandant l'application sans retard des réformes promises.

"Le Président du Meeting,
(Signé) "KÉVORK BASMADJIAN, *Prêtre.*"

"*Borisograd, 27 Janvier.*

"Le meeting de Hadji-Elléz, 24 du courant, protestant contre la mesure de l'enquête du Sassoun, et demandant l'application sans retard des réformes promises, a notre parfaite adhésion.

"Le Président du Meeting,
(Signé) "HATCHIK POHARIAN."

"*Bourgas, 27 Janvier.*

"La communauté Arménienne de Bourgas tint aujourd'hui un meeting de 800 personnes, et résolut de vous prier de faire parvenir aux Puissances sa voix pour protester contre la Commission d'Enquête, et demander les réformes garanties par les Signataires du Traité de Berlin.

"Le Président du Meeting,
(Signé) "ASKANAZIAN."

J'ai, &c.
(Signé) MINAS TCHÉRAZ.

Inclosure in No. 104.

Protocol.

(Traduction.)

LA Colonie Arménienne de Varna et les Arméniens récemment émigrés d'Arménie, au nombre de 2,500 personnes, dans l'enceinte de l'Église Arménienne en cette ville, sous la présidence du Révérend Père Ohan Mantagouni, se sont reunis aujourd'hui, le 8 (20) Janvier, 1895, en meeting spécial,

Ayant pour sujet la nouvelle publiée par la presse Européenne, portant que :—

La Sublime Porte, mise en demeure par les Puissances Européennes et les États-Unis d'Amérique de répondre des massacres récemment commis sur les Arméniens à Sassoun par l'armée régulière Turque et les Bachi-Bazouks, sous le commandement de Zéki Pacha, aurait recouru au subterfuge, jusqu'à présent si bien réussi en maintes occasions, de mander sur le lieu une Commission d'Enquête pour établir la réalité des faits déplorés ;

Cette Commission serait composée exclusivement des fonctionnaires Turcs Musulmans, mais la Sublime Porte aurait invité en même temps les Gouvernements d'Angleterre, de France, de Russie, et des États-Unis d'Amérique d'y joindre de leur côté des Délégués, dont le pouvoir ne dépasserait cependant pas la limite de surveiller les régularités des formes des procédés d'enquête, et tout au plus

auraient-ils le droit d'adresser aux témoins quelques questions, s'ils le croyaient nécessaire;

Or, considérant qu'en général les Commissions d'Enquête, composées même d'éléments mixtes, mandées jusqu'à présent en Arménie à maintes reprises, n'ont eu pour résultat que de mieux masquer les méfaits commis, et que surtout cette Commission, composée exclusivement de fonctionnaires Turcs Musulmans, ne voudrait pas, par un esprit de solidarité, même dévoiler les crimes perpétrés par d'autres fonctionnaires également Turcs Musulmans;

Considérant que cette fois-ci encore les Délégués Européens n'auraient qu'à assister à une mise en scène depuis longtemps organisée, car depuis bientôt cinq mois que les massacres ont été commis les autorités locales auront certainement eu le temps nécessaire d'en faire disparaître toute trace, et d'éloigner du lieu tout individu soupçonné capable de dénoncer la vérité, comme en effet il a été déjà rapporté par les organes de la Porte même, que plusieurs prisonniers pris dans les mêlées à Sassoun ont été déportés en d'autres localités de l'Empire;

Considérant que, par contre, les mêmes autorités auront déjà, par menaces ou par corruption, préparé des témoins qui, appelés par-devant la Commission d'Enquête, en présence des Délégués des Puissances, sauront déjouer la perspicacité de ceux-ci sur la nature de leurs dépositions de témoignage, et rendre impossible la constatation de la vérité par des contradictions, étudiées et arrangées d'avance, entre les témoins et les fonctionnaires enquérants;

Considérant que dans un pays où le terrorisme gouvernemental règne, et où les crimes sont perpétrés d'ordre, et par les fonctionnaires du Gouvernement même, tel que le massacre des Arméniens de Sassoun par le Général Zéki Pacha, il est illusoire de penser qu'on puisse démasquer par des enquêtes les malfaiteurs, tous fonctionnaires ou salariés du Gouvernement, dont les successeurs, supposant même que les coupables dénoncés soient punis, sauront cruellement faire expier aux témoins leur crime de franchise et de loyauté, comme cela a été après le procès de Moussa Bey et dans d'autres cas;

Considérant que le Gouvernement Turc, en décorant solennellement Zéki Pacha le lendemain même des sinistres exploits de celui-ci, a donné au monde la preuve éclatante que les atrocités commises étaient revêtues d'avance de son approbation, et que, par conséquent, toute déclaration tendant à démasquer les coupables sera considérée comme un acte de rébellion contre le Gouvernement même, et sera punie en conséquence;

Considérant qu'une Commission d'Enquête, dans ces conditions et circonstances, ne serait qu'une ironie cruelle, et que les honorables Délégués des Puissances, par la nature même de leur mandat, ne pouvant que surveiller les régularités des formes d'enquête, ne serviraient qu'à légaliser cette comédie perfide jouée par la Porte pour calmer la noble indignation des peuples Chrétiens d'Europe et d'Amérique contre les bourreaux des victimes;

Considérant, enfin, que les souffrances du peuple Arménien ne sont point l'œuvre de quelques fonctionnaires civils ou militaires privés, pour qu'elles puissent cesser par la punition des coupables; mais bien qu'elles sont les conséquences d'un système d'extermination prémédité, comme il appert de la protection accordée au chef brigand, Moussa Bey, lors du fameux procès de celui-ci, comme il appert de l'hospitalité accordée aux Chefs Kurdes dans les cercles Gouvernementaux, et des honneurs et distinctions dont ils ont été comblés, ayant été appelés à former des troupes régulières, sous le nom Impérial de "Hamidié," ce qui ne pouvait avoir autre but que de les mieux encourager dans leurs œuvres de déprédations contre les Arméniens, par éclatant mépris aux dispositions de l'Article LXI du Traité de Berlin, qui exigent, au contraire, la protection des Arméniens contre les dites hordes nomades; comme il appert enfin de la décoration accordée à Zéki Pacha, la férocité duquel remplit en ce moment de suprême indignation tous les cœurs nobles des peuples Chrétiens d'Europe et d'Amérique;

Le meeting a résolu:—

1. D'élever la voix et de protester auprès des Puissances Européennes et des États-Unis d'Amérique contre cette ruse criminelle de la Porte, sous masque de Commission d'Enquête, visant à déjouer la charitable attention du monde en faveur des victimes d'Arménie.

2. De prier les mêmes Puissances d'exiger, sans autre formalité, l'application sans retard des réformes nécessaires prévues par l'Article LXI du Traité de Berlin, unique moyen de garantir la vie, l'honneur, et les biens des Arméniens contre la politique Machiavélique de la Porte.

3. D'exprimer la reconnaissance des Arméniens aux nobles peuples d'Europe et d'Amérique, qui ont bien voulu flétrir, par l'écho unanime de leur sainte indignation, les atrocités du Gouvernement Turc contre le peuple Arménien, et les prier d'unir encore leurs voix à celles des Arméniens, afin d'appuyer auprès de leurs Gouvernements les revendications de l'Arménie.

4. De communiquer ces Résolutions du meeting au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Tzar, par le canal de Sa Sainteté Mgr. Mygerditch, Catholicos de tous les Arméniens, aux Gouvernements des Puissances Européennes et des États-Unis d'Amérique, par l'entremise de M. le Professeur Minas Tchéraz, Directeur du journal "Armenia-l'Arménie."

Le Président du meeting est chargé de pourvoir aux mesures nécessaires pour exécuter les Résolutions qui précèdent.

Pour le Meeting:
Le Président,
(Signé) OHAN MANTAGOUNI, *Prêtre.*

No. 105.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 41.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 31, 1895, 3:50 P.M.*

NO newspaper correspondents are allowed to visit Asia Minor, the Porte having revoked the official communication reported yesterday to your Lordship in my telegram No. 30.

I have consequently sent in the note mentioned in my telegram No. 37 to your Lordship.

No. 106.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 13.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 31, 1895.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram No. 41 of to-day relative to the prohibition by the Porte of visits of newspaper correspondents to Asia Minor.

Your action in the matter is approved.

No. 107.

Sir J. Pauncefote to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 1.)

(No. 49.)
My Lord, *Washington, January 21, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I have this day spoken unofficially to Mr Gresham in the sense of your Lordship's despatch No. 239 of the 21st ultimo respecting Armenia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

No. 108.

Sir E. Monson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 1.)

(No. 33. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Vienna, January 30, 1895.*

THE Persian Minister, Nériman Khan, called on me the day before yesterday, and inquired whether I had any recent information regarding the Armenian question.

I said that I did not expect to hear much until the Commission set to work, whereupon he told me that the Persian Consul-General at Erzeroum is an old friend of his, and that he is in constant private correspondence with him. It might therefore

interest me to know that the letters he had received from this gentleman confirmed to the fullest extent all the horrors that had been reported, and that this confirmation comes from purely Mussulman sources. It is further stated, however, that the efforts now and for some months past made to obliterate the traces of the atrocities, and to stifle the testimony that might be given in verification of them, will make the elucidation of the truth extremely difficult.

Nériman Khan informed me further that his intelligence from the Persian Embassy at Constantinople described the consternation and fury at the Yildiz Kiosk over the speech of Mr. Gladstone to the Armenian deputation as passing all bounds.

Count Kálnoky having, in our conversation yesterday, also inquired about Armenian affairs, I repeated to him what I have stated above, which his Excellency said is, as coming from such a source, extremely significative.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDMUND MONSON.

No. 109.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 46.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 1, 1895.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 52 of the 22nd ultimo relative to the case of brigandage at the village of Bogazkessen, near Van.

I approve your Excellency's action in calling attention of the Porte to the inaccuracies which Mr. Vice-Consul Hallward has pointed out in the version of the matter published officially in the Turkish papers.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 110.

Sir J. Pauncefote to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 2.)

(No. 27.)
My Lord, *Washington, January 24, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith, for your Lordship's information, a letter addressed by Mr. Comber, a British subject, overseer of the Merrimac Mining Company, Lowell, Massachusetts, to Her Majesty's Consul at Boston, relative to an alleged enrolment of Armenians by Russian agents in this country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

Inclosure in No. 110.

Mr. Comber to Consul Brown.

Sir, *Lowell, Massachusetts, January 19, 1895.*

I AM an overseer, employed by the Merrimac Mining Company, Lowell. To-day a brother overseer, during a conversation, informed me of a little incident which is about to take place, and as the same may be of interest to you, I take it upon myself to acquaint you with the facts.

Mr. Pickup, the above-mentioned overseer, is, like myself, an Englishman. He employs probably fifty men, half of whom are Armenians. These men think very highly of their overseer, and freely discuss with him on any and every subject touching upon the politics of their country. Yesterday one of their number informed him that he with several of his countrymen were about to leave America for Russia.

Upon being questioned in detail, it appears the Armenians intend to leave in batches from New York for England, and from there to Russia, where they will be drilled by Russian officers, after which they will be sent to Armenia to organize people and drill them according to Russian methods.

These Russian agents, who have been secretly acting in Boston and New York for several weeks, also promised these men that Russia, in conjunction with France, intended to concentrate their soldiers in Armenia, and finally march into and subdue Turkey.

Whether there is any serious meaning to the above I of course am hardly in a position to say, but I do know for a fact that these men leave our employment on Monday next, will go to New York on Tuesday, and finally embark with several hundred of their countrymen on Wednesday steamer for England, and that they will take the first steamer from London for Russia. Why Russia, and not Armenia?

I am, &c.
(Signed) JOHN H. COMBER.

No. 111.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 2.)

(No. 10.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburgh, February 2, 1895.*

COUNT KAPNIST tells me that although a large immigration from all parts of Armenia has been taking place for the last two years, he is not aware of any refugees having crossed into Russian territory from the Sassoon district.

In compliance with his request, I have embodied the substance of your Lordship's telegram No. 4 in an official note which will be communicated to the Caucasian authorities.

He added that if any refugees had crossed the frontier from Sassoon there would probably be no objection to examining them.

No. 112.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 2.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February 2, 1895.*

HER Majesty's Government understand that Armenians from the districts of Moush and Sassoon have sought refuge in Persian territory in considerable numbers.

It would be desirable to obtain information from these refugees with regard to the events in those districts and the actions of both Kurds and Turkish soldiery.

Could trustworthy statements be obtained from them by Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez either directly or by means of the missionaries?

No. 113.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 3, 5·30 P.M.)

(No. 44.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February 3, 2·10 P.M.*

MARKHAM left for Alexandretta without a Turkish passport, which was refused him. I have asked Porte to send instructions not to raise difficulties as to his landing without one. They refuse unless assured that he will not go beyond Aleppo, and request me to order him not to go beyond that place. I have declined to take any such action without instructions from your Lordship.

I am telegraphing to inform Markham at Mersyna, where he should arrive about to-morrow.

No. 114.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 11.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February 4, 1895.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 51 of the 22nd ultimo relative to the Armenians from Armoudan imprisoned at Erzingian. I presume that you

have as yet been unable to obtain information in reply to the inquiries made in my telegrams No. 7 of the 11th and No. 12 of the 28th ultimo on this subject.

Even if the report of Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum be correct, the sentences passed on these men appear excessive. Unless they are being revised, it is desirable that you should address a remonstrance on the subject to the Turkish Government.

No. 115.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 15.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February 4, 1895.*

ACCORDING to a Reuter's telegram from Vienna which has appeared in to-day's newspapers, a Circular has been issued by the Turkish Minister of Justice to the Courts, ordering in the case of all Armenians convicted the infliction of the maximum penalty allowed by law. If there is any foundation for this report, your Excellency should make a strong remonstrance to the Turkish Government.

No. 116.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 16.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February 4, 1895.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram No. 41 of the 3rd instant relative to a request made to you by the Porte that you should order Mr. Markham, the "Times" correspondent, who has gone to Alexandretta without a Turkish passport, not to proceed beyond Aleppo.

Your Excellency should decline to interfere in the matter, leaving the entire responsibility with the Turkish Government.

No. 116*.

Sir M. Durand to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 5.)

(No. 5.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, February 5, 1895.*

I REPEATED your Lordship's telegram No. 2 of the 2nd instant respecting the Armenian massacres to Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez. He now suggests going himself to the frontier or sending Mr. Paton, but he is not hopeful of obtaining any information.

I would recommend sending Mr. Wood or Colonel Picot, who has just returned from the frontier, if Her Majesty's Government would desire a formal inquiry and the recording of evidence. If an informal inquiry is preferred, Mr. Paton could probably obtain some useful information, without attracting attention, through the missionaries and otherwise.

When Colonel Picot was in Julfa last November, he saw 100 Armenian refugees, who said nothing about the massacres, but complained of general persecution. He heard that in the last twelve months 1,000 Armenian families had passed through Julfa *en route* for Russia.

No. 117.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley. (Received February 5.)

(No. 45.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 5, 1895, 7·5 P.M.*

I HAVE now received a telegram from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum to the effect that the final sentences on the Armoudan prisoners referred to in your Lordship's telegram No. 14 have been kept secret.

At my request the Grand Vizier, who professes to be ignorant on the subject, has telegraphed to Erzingian for particulars as to their sentences.

No. 118.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 48.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 5, 1895.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 43 of the 19th ultimo reporting your interviews with Mgr. Izmirlian, the Armenian Patriarch.

I approve your Excellency's language, and the advice which you gave to His Beatitude to exercise moderation in the tone of his letter to the Porte.

With regard to the question of inter-communication between the Patriarch and the Embassies to which you refer, I agree with your Excellency that it is of importance that His Beatitude should be free to visit you whenever the occasion may require.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 119.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 65.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 28, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 557 of the 4th December, 1893, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond in regard to the case of the Arzoglous of Samsoon exiled to Smyrna.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 119.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, January 23, 1895.*

WITH reference to the case of the Arzoglous reported in despatches of the 28th March and 12th November, 1893, I regret to have to inform your Excellency that, by decision of the Grand Vizier, both father and son are to be exiled to Smyrna.

As a consequence, this very respectable and prominent Greek firm of Samsoon, with rather great business connections, is likely to be driven to the verge of bankruptcy.

The treatment to which the Central Government is subjecting these persons, simply because, as agents of the Pan-Hellenic Steam-ship Company, a batch of revolutionary Armenian newspapers had been addressed to their care, is exciting among even Turks here anything but a favourable opinion of Ottoman justice.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 120.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 66.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January 28, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 45 of the 19th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond regarding Armenian informers in the Vilayet of Sivas.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 120.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, January 21, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 12th instant, Dr. Jewett, in his of the 16th, informs me that the Vali of Sivas admitted to him as substantially correct the account given of the doings of Zilleh. His Excellency, moreover, told him that a similar affair occurred recently at Karahissar, where an Armenian assassin accused a large number of men as revolutionists, who, though arrested, were subsequently released, as the evidence given against them was found to be absolutely false.

Dr. Jewett further reports what he heard from an Armenian of Char Kishla, 75 miles south-west of Sivas, to the effect that the police there had, early this month, been securing on blank papers the seals of the fourteen Armenian villages, and the signatures of their more prominent inhabitants, without making it known for what purpose.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 120*.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 67.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January 28, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copies of despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo regarding the state of affairs in the districts of Marash and Zeitoun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 120*.

Consul Barnham to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Aleppo, January 12, 1895.*

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 20th ultimo, informing me that your Excellency had been pleased to make representations to the Porte on the subject of the state of affairs in the districts of Marash and Zeitoun, I have the honour to forward, for your Excellency's perusal, a letter which I have received from Mr. Sanders, of the American Mission in Aintab, and which I forward with that gentleman's consent.

Mr. Sanders' letter shows that there is real ground for uneasiness as to the future, owing to the increasing hostility of the Moslem population, and he attributes this chiefly to the attitude of Shahan Effendi, the Head of the Police.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

Inclosure 2 in No. 120*.

Mr. Sanders to Consul Barnham.

(Private.)

Dear Sir, *Aleppo, Syria, January 11, 1895.*

I WISH to write to you privately with regard to the state of affairs in Marash. Of course, I refer to the condition of the Armenians.

You know well how sad has been the state of this city ever since the fall of 1890, when the so-called rebellion took place. Marash was then ruled by a Pasha—Salih Pasha—who accentuated the troubles by every means in his power, showing bitter hatred to the Christians. When he was relieved there followed a series of men who were, to say the least, not fitter haters of the Christians, though not specially impartial, but under them Marash did fairly well.

In the summer of 1893, however, two events* occurred which greatly excited the anti-Christian feeling. I may say that before this the Christians had a good friend in the most powerful local Moslem Agha. He died, however, in the summer of 1893. Since then the powerful local Moslems have all been enemies. Late in [?] a Christian girl was abducted and married to a Moslem. The legal formalities were not strictly observed, and without giving the Christians any fair chance to see the girl, she was proclaimed a Moslem, and the incident passed. It is mentioned here as being a main reason why under the rule of fairly moderate Mutessarifs the Moslem fanaticism becomes so fierce a passion

Suspicion and fear reigns there supreme. The military force is large, but more anti-Christian perhaps than the local Moslems.

A great factor is the Head of the Police, Shaham Effendi. I do not call him a bad man, as many do, but he is certainly one of the most suspicious and bitterest haters of Christians, and especially Armenians, to be found anywhere. His removal would be a great gain.

The whole Government is bitterly anti-Christian.

The great trouble is the credulity of the Moslems. They believe and act at once on the wildest stories of arms, ammunition, &c. Mr. Lee informs me that lately the Moslems were under arms four nights after one of these silly stories had been floated around the street.

I am very sorry to say what I have about the Head of the Police, because he has treated me personally so well. Truth, however, compels me to make the statement. In fine, Marash is in the condition of a loaded and cocked musket. It will in all probability not go off; but its explosion is possible, and if it does not much of the Christian population would be left.

I feel it my duty to warn you of these facts.

Yours, &c.
(Signed) C. S. SANDERS.

Inclosure 3 in No. 120*.

Consul Barnham to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Aleppo, January 12, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 7th and to your Excellency's telegram of the 10th ultimo, disapproving the appointment of Mr. Michel Antaki as Consular Agent at Aintab, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have made provisional

* The second event was the ravishing of a mother and daughter—Armenians.

arrangement with Dr. Sheppard, of the American Mission in Aintab, and with the Reverend Mr. Macallum, a Canadian gentleman of the American Mission in Marash, to keep me informed of any important events which may occur in their districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 121.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 68.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 28, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 446 of the 2nd October, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, transmitting copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting the return to Persia of the notorious Mami Pasha, a Chief of the Shekak Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 121.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, January 16, 1895.*

WITH reference to my Confidential despatch of the 18th September, 1894, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch, as marked in the margin,* which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting the return to Persia of the notorious Mami Pasha, a Chief of the Shekak Kurds, whose depredations on the Christians, and promotion by the Government to the rank of Pasha and a command of Hamidiyé cavalry, were reported by Mr. Hallward in the inclosure to my above-mentioned despatch.

I learn from my Persian colleague that Mami, who was outlawed from Persia, has made his submission to the Persian authorities, and been allowed to return, so that there is some hope of the Van district being finally relieved of his presence.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 122.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 69.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 28, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 231 of the 15th May, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, transmitting a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, respecting the alleged ill-treatment and poisoning of Karrekin Paghestsian and other Armenian prisoners in Van.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

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* Vice-Consul Hallward, January 7, 1895.

Inclosure 1 in No. 122.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, January 16, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van on the subject of the alleged poisoning in prison of an Armenian prisoner named Karrekin Paghestsian, and of other similar cases of alleged poisoning or otherwise shortening the lives of Armenian prisoners in the Van gaols.

I fear that Mr. Hallward's strictures upon the judicial and police authorities of Van are only too well founded, as well as his remark that their improper action could be controlled by the Vali, Bahri Pasha, if he were so inclined.

Your Excellency will see, by reference to my despatch of the 4th May last, that the prisoner Karrekin has a considerable record as a political agitator, and does not appear to be deserving of any sympathy or representations in his favour, so long as he is dealt with in accordance with the law, and not made the victim of extra-judicial ill-treatment, the proof of which it would, of course, be most difficult to procure.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 122.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, January 8, 1895.*

I BEG to call your serious attention to the action of the judicial and police officials here. A young man named Karrekin Paghestsian wrote a few days ago to one of his friends that he was being poisoned with arsenic in prison, and expected to die shortly.

His history is as follows: He was a pupil of Portakalian, who had a school in Van, which was closed by the Government in June 1885. He then accompanied his schoolmaster's family to Marseilles, where Portakalian now edits an Armenian newspaper. He remained there ten months, went back to Constantinople, where he was imprisoned for a fortnight, and on his release returned to Van, where he started a native cloth factory. He was then 18.

In December 1887 he was arrested on a charge of carrying on treasonable correspondence, was severely tortured, as reported by Mr. Russell in his despatch of the 3rd January, 1888, remained in prison eighteen months, and was released in June 1889. In May 1890 he was arrested, in company with a certain Armenian brigand named Agvo, whom he was accused of having helped to escape from prison, and was imprisoned again for eleven months, and then granted the Sultan's pardon and release.

On his release he was given a small post in the Government, but after the departure of Khalil Bey, the late Vali (now Vali of Sivas), and on the arrival of the present Vali, seeing that prosecutions were being begun against certain Armenians who had been appointed to posts by Khalil Bey, he fled in April 1892 to Russia, and was condemned by default to ten years' imprisonment on the same charges on which Natanian Garabed Effendi was condemned, as reported by Mr. FitzMaurice in his despatch of the 27th July, 1892.

At the beginning of last year he very rashly returned to Van, and, after remaining in hiding in his father's house for three months, was captured by the police and again imprisoned in April last.

Since then his case has been reopened, and an attempt has been made to implicate him in the Kurubash murder case, reported by Mr. Devey in his despatch of the 30th May, 1893. Judgment was given in this case in April last against certain Armenians who are known to have been in Persia at the time, and this in spite of the fact that a Kurd was distinctly identified in court by one of the girls who was raped as having taken part in the crime, and there was a strong suspicion against other Kurds. Karrekin's name was not mentioned at the time in connection with the murder, and, indeed, it is known that he was at Tiflis at the time; but to show the way in which such cases are conducted

here, I may mention that a Kurd was brought into court to identify Karrekin as having been seen near Kurubash the day of the murder. The Kurd, who had never seen Karrekin before, could not identify him, and thereupon the President of the Court pointed to Karrekin, and asked whether that was not the man.

No decision has yet been given against him on this charge; but there is a general belief that the Government do not intend to let him out of prison alive, and that if they cannot condemn him judicially to death, they will find other means to make away with him. Whether he has actually been poisoned I cannot say for certain; but, though naturally of strong constitution, he is at present in a very weak state, and has certainly been maltreated in prison.

Precedents are not wanting for the shortening of life in prison here. Last year a young Armenian, whose father, Mohsi Sahag, had been killed by Kurds in August 1891, was arrested on some frivolous charge at Shattakh, and was poisoned, and died in prison there.

In October 1892 a policeman, Nouri by name, was murdered in Van; the murderers (Armenians) escaped to Persia; other Armenians were arrested as accomplices; one was hung, and four died in prison.

I do not for a moment deny that Karrekin's early record was such as to make him justly an object of suspicion to the Government; but I would also point out that he was granted the Sultan's pardon in 1891, and was then thought fit by the Vali to occupy a post in the Government, and yet, little more than a year later, he was condemned to ten years' imprisonment.

Another case merits attention. In November 1892, an army lieutenant from Constantinople, named Edhem Bey, was killed at Shattakh by a Kurd named Aziz for having, or tried to have, illicit connection with the latter's sister-in-law. Armenians were accused of the murder, though they could have had no possible motive for committing it, and thirteen Armenians are in prison here and four at Shattakh on a charge of being implicated in this affair. Among those in prison here is a certain Malkhass, who was arrested a month or two ago; he is originally from Shattakh, but has not been there for years. He is accused of having written a letter to incite some of his friends there to commit the crime, but the letter has not been produced, and the accusation is absurd.

I see that the Vali's version of the Bogaz-Kessen case, reported in my despatch of the 27th December last, has been published in the English press. The case in itself was insignificant—an ordinary collision between zaptiehs and Kurds; but the story of the twenty Armenians in Kurd disguise was evidently fabricated for political purposes, to serve as a sort of counterpoise to other intelligence from this part of the world now being published in Europe.

I have brought the above cases to your notice, not because there is anything extraordinary or unusual about them, but because my special attention happens to have been called to them. I have no doubt there are other persons in prison here on frivolous or groundless charges, and complaints of ill-treatment in the prisons have been made from time to time for years past. As for the Criminal Courts, Christians may look in vain for justice from such men as fill the principal posts—the President of the Criminal Court, the Procureur-Général, and the President of the Criminal Court of Appeal, especially the two latter, being fanatics of the worst description.

I had occasion to allude to the bad character of Nouri Effendi, the Chief of the Police, in my despatch of the 27th December, but I must add that all these officials appear to be supported and encouraged by Bahri Pasha, the Vali, in their irregular and unjust proceedings; and that, if he chose, he could control them, the independence of the Judicature being little more than nominal here. Nouri Effendi was for a long time Second Police Commissioner; the last Chief of Police left here after a short stay some two years ago, finding that he could do nothing, because the Vali put everything in Nouri's hands. Nouri then acted as Chief of Police for about a year and a-half, and was lately promoted to that post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 123.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 70.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 28, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, transmitting a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting Armenian apostacy to Islamism.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 123.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzéroum, January 17, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that a family of five Armenians of Sibgantz, in that province, had become Moslems, the supposed cause being their inability to pay the military exemption tax, for which they were being pressed.

Similar cases of "conversion" to Islam for purely material reasons have, I understand, become more frequent of late in the Bitlis Vilayet; but I have known cases in which the request by Christians to be allowed to embrace Islam was refused by the local Sub-Governor, on the very practical ground that, if the Armenians all turned Mussulmans, there would be no one left for him to squeeze.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 123.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, January 9, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, a few days ago, a family of five Armenians, from the village of Sibgantz, in the district of Mukus, in this vilayet, became Moslem.

I am told that the reason of their change of religion was that they were pressed for the payment of the military exemption tax, and, not being able to pay, turned Turk to save themselves from further molestation. Two of them who came here were presented with 100 piastres each by the Government.

Many of the Armenian peasants are now reduced to such poverty that they have little choice left except to turn Turk or leave the country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 124.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 71.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 28, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 4 of the 1st January, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the substitute of Hassan Tahsin Pasha when suspended from his functions as Vali of Bitlis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 124.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir,

Erzeroum, January 18, 1895.

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 10th instant, I had to-day the honour to suggest by telegraph that when Hassan Tahsin Pasha is suspended from his functions as Vali of Bitlis, he should not be permitted to name his substitute.

The Mektoubdji of the vilayet, whom he would probably designate as his *locum tenens*, is his creature, being the official referred to in my despatch of the 21st ultimo as procuring forged signatures to a document in which Mr. Hallward was accused of exciting the Armenians to revolt.

On the other hand, I am informed that the Cadi, who is also President of the Appeal Court, is an honest man, and might advantageously be appointed Acting Vali *ad interim*.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 125.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 72.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, January 28, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the movements of M. Ximenes, and the impossibility of his presence at Sassoon during the massacres at that district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 125.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir,

Erzeroum, January 18, 1895.

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 15th instant, I had the honour to report the substance of what follows by telegraph to-day on the subject of M. Ximenes' movements in this country at the time of the alleged atrocities in Sassoon, which he has taken upon himself to contradict.

He left Van on the 27th August, and reached Erzeroum on the 8th September, having spent three days at Akhlat, on the Lake of Van, in the interval. It would have been almost impossible for him to have visited Bitlis and Moush, even without halting, between the above dates, but I have also what appears to me sufficient direct evidence that he came straight from Akhlat to Erzeroum by the Boulanik road. The Sassoon disturbances, according to Mr. Hallward, lasted from the 19th August to the 10th September.

It was notorious at Erzeroum that M. Ximenes travelled at the expense of the Turkish Government, and he was accompanied everywhere by two police officials, who defrayed all his charges. The independence of his testimony, as well as its veracity, may be judged from the above details, which I can easily substantiate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 126.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 73. Confidential.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, January 28, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 14 of the 7th January, I have the honour to state that Abdur Razzaek Bey has returned to Turkey, and is at present in Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 127.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 74.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, January 29, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Beyrout, respecting the administration of Naoum Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 127.

Consul Eyres to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir,

Beyrout, January 19, 1895.

WITH reference to Colonel Trotter's Confidential despatch of the 9th March last, I have the honour to report, for your Excellency's information, that my observation during the past seven months has only confirmed what Colonel Trotter stated in the concluding paragraphs of the above-mentioned despatch, viz., that Naoum Pasha is weak and is much under the influence of the Emir Mustapha, Kaimakam of the Shouf.

It is perfectly certain that the Pasha, though honest and well-intentioned, has lamentably failed in gaining the confidence and the respect of the Lebanese, and his Excellency is himself, I believe, aware of this fact, and plainly shows his distaste for his position.

The Emir Mustapha is the principal cause of this state of affairs. He is a very clever though unprincipled man, and his power over the Pasha, gained I know not by what means, is most marked. His behaviour in the presence of the Governor-General is at times most disrespectful, judged by Oriental standards, as he does not give himself the trouble to rise on the Pasha's entrance. Those who have tried to resist the Emir's influence have invariably found themselves baffled, as Naoum Pasha, though perhaps according to their representations at the time, nay, though convinced of the justice of their cause, is always eventually won over by the Emir.

During the summer I had a long and very frank conversation with Naoum Pasha, and the impression left on my mind was that his Excellency was well aware of the state of the public opinion, and that he had struggled, though somewhat feebly, to free himself from his incubus. Amongst other things he told me that in spite of the remonstrances of the Emir he had dismissed his faithful follower and henchman, the Mudir of Aleih, using the term, "Je lui ai cassé le bras droit." This was an exaggeration, for the post is not of great importance, and the Mudir is a man of small consideration, but in a few days even this act was nullified by the appointment of the Mudir's brother to the post.

In support of these observations I venture to relate an incident that occurred shortly after Colonel Trotter left. A young Druse lady of the family of the Reslan, and niece of the Emir, who had been educated by the Sœurs de Charité in Beyrout, and who was consequently very much superior to her surroundings, was desirous of marrying the Emir Amin Reslan, her cousin, who was equally anxious on his part to

marry her. As her dowry was large the Emir Mustapha coveted her hand and wealth for his son, and persuaded the father to oppose the match. The poor girl was confined in a mountain house and treated with much cruelty for some months, until her mind began to give way. Naoum Pasha was much pressed by many persons to prevent this injustice as the girl was of age, and her parents had no legal right to treat her in this fashion. Colonel Trotter, before he left, also pleaded her cause with the Pasha, who promised that he would do what lay in his power. He, however, hesitated so long that at length the girl was finally driven mad by a cruel stratagem. She heard shots fired, and her father brought her a bloody fez and handkerchief belonging to Emir Amin, informing her that finding him near the house he had had him shot. Then the Pasha brought her down to Beyrout, and the English and French doctors sent to examine her gave their opinion that she might very likely recover her reason if placed in charge of proper persons and treated with proper care. I had some communication with the Pasha on the subject, and though much distressed and evidently desirous of aiding the victim, he did not dare offend the Emir Mustapha. He, however, promised that he would act in accordance with the doctor's recommendations. The Pasha first kept her in his own house and then sent her to the French Sisters. Here she was rapidly recovering, and the doctors strongly urged her remaining there, when on a pretext the Emir caused her removal to a Moslem house. The fact was, I believe, that her relations knew her to be a Christian at heart; in which case it was all the more incumbent on Naoum Pasha to protect her.

Finally, in spite of the reiterated protests and remonstrances of the doctors, and in contravention of his promise to me, Naoum Pasha sent her to Constantinople to a Turkish Maison de Santé, where, as I since learn, she shortly became hopelessly insane. According to the doctors' declarations, Naoum Pasha, urged by the Emir, is responsible for this girl's ruin.

In the Administration of the Shouf, of which the Emir is Kaimakam, his party has obtained a complete ascendency over that of the Jemblatts. Since the arrival of Naoum Pasha only one partizan of the latter family has been named to a post, and he is the nephew of the principal Druse Sheikh, and was appointed out of consideration for his uncle. On the other hand, the President, the Moslem member and the clerks of the Shouf Court, the head gaoler, and all the officials of the Central Administration of the Shouf, were replaced by partizans of Emir Mustapha. Out of twelve Mudirs, ten are Emir Mustapha's men. All the Sheikhs and Mukhtars (who number in all about 300) who were known to be friendly to the Jemblatts were changed. Even the zaptiehs were treated in similar fashion.

In the Administrative Council the three Druse members are of Emir Mustapha's party, and the Druse President of the Criminal Court of Appeal and the Druse and Moslem members of the Civil Court of Appeal were selected from the same.

These facts and figures speak for themselves. The effect on the population is very bad, and all the Jemblatt party are furious. It is not consistent either with the essential idea of the Lebanon Government that all posts should be held by any one party. But it is impossible to make the Pasha see this, or, if he sees it, to alter his course. His Excellency promises, defers, promises again, and finally succumbs to the stronger will of the Emir. The Emir's word is law throughout the Shouf, and continual complaints of injustice come to my ears, as the Shouf Courts are entirely subservient to the Kaimakam. Under Rustem Pasha I believe the Emir governed his district well; he is a good servant, but a bad master.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. C. A. EYRES.

No. 128.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February 6.*)

(No. 75.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 29, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora, reporting an improvement in the relations between the Turkish authorities and Armenians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 128.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Angora, January 24, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that three days ago I was visited by an Armenian who had just arrived from Yozgat, and who, though personally not well disposed towards the Government, admitted that during the last few weeks there had been a slight improvement in the relations between Turks and Armenians in that place, owing to a more friendly attitude on the part of the authorities, who had, to a certain extent, relaxed the stringent measures adopted after the events of last year.

This amelioration of the situation at Yozgat is mainly due to instructions from Constantinople to the Vali, who admitted as much in the course of a conversation I had with him yesterday.

For some time past I have noticed a better disposition on the part of Memdouh Pasha towards Armenians in general, but I am afraid that, though he may perhaps not consider it worth while to countenance the creation of any future disturbance in this vilayet into a seditious movement, there are no signs of any attempt to redress existing abuses in the outlying districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 129.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February 6.*)

(No. 78.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 30, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have received from Mr. Shipley a telegraphic summary of the proceedings at the second sitting of the Commission, which was held on the 27th instant.

The President, after reading out a résumé of certain documents from Bitlis which contained an official account from the Turkish point of view of the events which are to form the subject of the inquiry, proposed that they should commence proceedings by summoning and examining all the persons mentioned in the documents he had just read.

The foreign Delegates disapproved of this proposal, which they considered as unlikely to lead to any practical result. Mr. Shipley, therefore, with the full concurrence of his colleagues, suggested that the first duty of the Commission was to inquire into the truth of the accusations which had been brought against the Imperial troops of having burnt some twenty-seven villages, and of having massacred a great part of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, and that the question of responsibility might be left to be settled later.

The Turkish Commissioners all supported the President's proposal, and the suggestion of the Delegates was defeated. Mr. Shipley, however, informs me that it was recorded on the Minutes of the proceedings, and that if necessary he can bring it before the Commission again.

My colleagues and I have not thought it necessary to take any action at present in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 130.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February 6.*)

(No. 79.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 30, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, inclosing a list of Armenian prisoners of Zeitoun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 130.

Consul Barnham to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Aleppo, January* 14, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a list of the Armenians of Zeitoun who are now in prison here and at other places for offences committed during the troubles of 1890 and 1891. These names have been extracted from a letter which I have received from Garabed, Archbishop of Zeitoun, now in prison at Aleppo.

The writer is evidently buoyed up with the hope that Her Majesty's Government will intervene on behalf of the Zeitoun prisoners, and he states that whereas His Imperial Majesty the Sultan has twice granted a general amnesty, by which they were all entitled to benefit, those among them who had been unable to purchase their liberty had been excluded from the benefit of these amnesties through the representations of the local authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

Inclosure 2 in No. 130.

List of Armenian Prisoners undergoing Sentences for Offences committed at Zeitoun in 1890-91.

1. NIGHOGHOS, Archbishop of Fernouz, aged 91, charged with harbouring rebels, sentenced to eight years' imprisonment in a fortified place. Sixteen years ago he was arrested as a disaffected person and sent to Constantinople, but was subsequently pardoned by the Sultan. Three months ago he was removed to the castle of Bondrun, in the Vilayet of Smyrna, where he is now imprisoned.

2. Garabed, Archbishop of Zeitoun, accused of having been President of a Revolutionary Committee; of having fortified the monastery of St. Saviour for purposes of war; of having attacked the prison at Zeitoun, and enabled two prisoners to escape. Sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. Is now at Aleppo.

3. Deir Ghevonté Djenanian, a priest of Marash, accused of treason and sentenced to death. Is now in prison at Aleppo, and his wife, with twelve children, are in great misery.

4. Sinpad Purad, a young poet of Zeitoun, late Director of the Armenian school in Samsoon, charged with having published revolutionary songs, and inspired the people of Zeitoun to revolt. He is now in Aleppo gaol, undergoing five and a-half years' imprisonment.

5. Panoss Mozian, of Zeitoun, charged with having distributed arms to the revolutionary party in Zeitoun. Sentenced to five years' hard labour.

6. Kaloz Haydondian, charged with having fired at the Kaïmakam of Zeitoun, and resisted the Imperial troops. Sentenced to ten years' penal servitude.

7. Muggerditch Bulbulian, eight years' penal servitude.
8. Gabriel Bostanian, ditto.
9. Kevork Tchakerian, ditto.
10. Assadour Tozlian, five years' penal servitude.
11. Krikor Tarkakian, ditto.
12. Sarkis Bochtchian, ditto.
13. Boghos Davidian, eight years' penal servitude.
14. Sarkis Hassenian, five years' penal servitude.
15. Sarkis Harsnoukian, ditto.
16. Sarkis Mardavoulian, ditto.
17. Garabed Bulbulian, ditto.
18. Mikael Oghoulian, ditto.
19. Panoss Bostanian, ditto.
20. Vartan Mathossian, ditto.
21. Artin Gandjian, ditto.
22. Agob Demuk Alamanoghlou, ditto.
23. Assadour Kupelian, ditto.
24. Sitrak, ditto.
25. Vaness, ditto.

26. Manong, five years' penal servitude.
27. Artin, ditto.
28. Elisabeth Ohanessian, charged with exciting to rebellion by singing revolutionary songs. Sentenced to three years' imprisonment.
29. Basdurma Panoss Simonian, sentenced to death. Recently removed from the prison of Aleppo to that of Marash.
30. Artin Agha Krikorian, a tailor of Aleppo, accused of having assisted the prisoners of Zeitoun, and of having read the newspaper "Hutchag." Sentenced to two years' imprisonment. This case is of more recent date.

No. 131.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No 80.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 30, 1895.

WITH reference to previous correspondence on the subject, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora as to the value of the information of Professor Ximenes on the recent events in the Sandjak of Moush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 131.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Angora, January* 26, 1895.

PROMINENCE having been given in certain English papers to Professor Ximenes' account of recent events in the Moush Sandjak, I have the honour to submit to your Excellency the following remarks, which may assist in judging as to the weight to be attached to information derived from that source.

Shortly after the disturbances that took place in the town and district of Yozgat last winter, that gentleman—whose card bore the address of Rawal Pindi, British India—arrived at Angora from Constantinople, and proceeded at once to Yozgat on his mission, the real object of which was, I feel certain, known to your Excellency.

It was afterwards reported to me that during his stay at Yozgat the armed soldiers and police, who had been told off in considerable numbers to patrol the streets, were ordered to lay by their arms for the time being.

The members of the Constantinople and local secret police, who accompanied him wherever he went under the guise of interpreters or escort, allowed no communication between him and the Armenians. He, however, called on the Armenian Bishop, to whom he said, "There must be a certain American subject here named Adam Effendi who seems to have suffered tortures in prison, because I read his report in the papers. Where is that gentleman? I should like to see him." The Bishop, fearing the spies who were with his interlocutor, replied, "No such person exists here" (viz., no one who had suffered tortures); and, pointing to another Armenian in the room, called Adanian Hadji Agha, he said, "Here is Adam Effendi." This man was thereupon interrogated by M. Ximenes, who thought he was the real Adam Aivazian, of Eglendé, on account of the resemblance in names, and he naturally denied having been tortured or even imprisoned.

I am not aware whether the reports of M. Ximenes from Yozgat were subsequently published, but if some or all were not brought to light, the arrival at Angora of two detectives from Constantinople—who searched the weekly mail from the interior, which coincided with his stay at Yozgat, for his letters as I was creditably told—might possibly have had some connection with their suppression.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 132.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 82.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 30, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of an official communication, which appeared in the "Tarik" newspaper on the 29th instant, in regard to the Armenian disorders at Tokat.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 132.

Extract from the "Tarik" of January 29, 1895.

(Translation.)

Official Communication.

COPY of a cypher telegram from Mustapha Pasha, President of the Tokat court-martial, to the First Secretary of His Majesty the Sultan: —

"About 7 o'clock yesterday evening, on a report that two Armenians had been wounded in a house in the town, I proceeded to the spot, together with the Mutessarif and the Assistant Procureur-Général, to inquire into the matter. From the inquiry it was ascertained that the persons referred to were volunteer members of a Revolutionary Committee, and that the perpetrators of the crime, five members of the same Committee, had been arrested with great tact by the Mayor of Gendarmes in another house. They were found to be armed with pistols and knives. It was a case of blackmail, and the receipt exchanged was discovered. One of the wounded men was in a dying state, while the wounds of the others were very serious. When it was reported that they were respectable Armenians, the other respectable Armenians were thrown into consternation, but dare not declare themselves openly in face of the revolutionary agents. The matter is being looked into by the judicial authorities, and tranquillity now reigns."

The "Tarik" of to-day announces numerous decorations for officers of the Hamidieh Kurdish irregular cavalry regiments.

No. 133.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 84. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 31, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter from Moosh, communicated to me confidentially by the Armenian Patriarch, together with a list of the villages in the Sassoon and Kharzan districts which I have received from the same source.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 133.

Letter received from Moosh, dated November 20, 1894.

(Traduction littérale.)

NOTRE état est des plus critiques et des plus désespérés. Nous nous sommes trouvés dans l'obligation de quitter nos villages et de chercher refuge à Mouch. Ainsi

quarante villages ont été totalement abandonnés; les autorités de Mouch nous ont dispersé dans les villages lointains afin de nous mettre dans l'impossibilité de porter plainte. Nous avons voulu présenter une supplique aux Pachas arrivés ici; mais les autorités avaient ordonné à tous les écrivains publics ("arzouhaldjis") de la ville de n'écrire quoique cela soit de la part des Arméniens.

Nous avons rédigé une supplique en langue Arménienne, que nous avons porté au Palais du Gouvernement. Mais toutes les fois que nous nous sommes présentés pour remettre la supplique, les gendarmes nous ont battus et nous ont obligé de retourner la pièce en main.

Ne trouvant aucun autre moyen pour faire parvenir nos doléances aux Pachas, nous nous sommes rendus en masse au Palais du Gouvernement, et par nos cris nous avons réussi à attirer leur attention. Alors ils sont venus auprès de nous et ont pris notre supplique.

Le Bin-bachi, qui pendant les massacres de Sassoun avait montré le plus de férocité, en tuant et en faisant tuer la pauvre population, se trouvant au Palais du Gouvernement lors de cette démarche, nous l'avons montré comme l'un des auteurs de nos malheurs. Le Bin-bachi a répondu qu'il n'avait rien fait et que toute l'affaire était imputable aux Kurdes. Comment pouvons-nous espérer justice quand les auteurs des massacres se trouvent être nos juges?

Le Gouvernement local s'adresse depuis quelques jours à l'autorité ecclésiastique Arménienne de Mouch et aux émigrés de Sassoun pour faire signer des Pétitions démentant les massacres.

Le Mufti de Mouch a fait préparer un Mazbata, qu'il a proposé de signer aux Notables de la communauté Arménienne.

Voici en substance le contenu de ce Mazbata:

Nous nous déclarons contents et nous exprimons notre reconnaissance pour l'administration juste et équitable dont nous jouissons sous les auspices de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan.

Jamais nous n'avons eu à nous plaindre de la conduite des Turcs et des Kurdes à notre égard.

Quelques brigands qui étaient dernièrement venus ici de l'Angleterre ayant commis des actes de brigandage en s'associant avec les brigands de Talori, le Gouvernement s'est empressé de faire le nécessaire pour les arrêter. Les mesures prises dans ce but ont été couronnées de succès.

Les Notables ont répondu aux demandes pressantes du Mufti, qu'ils avaient rapporté les faits au Patriarcat, et qu'ils ne pouvaient par des mensonges assumer la responsabilité de tant de sang versé par le massacre de milliers d'innocents.

Le Mufti a répondu alors à nos Notables par de féroces menaces, en disant qu'il les considérait comme les ennemis du Gouvernement et en déclarant qu'on les massacrerait aussi et que la question serait résolue faute de témoin.

Les autorités militaires ont aussi préparé de leur côté un autre Mazbata qu'elles ont remis au nommé Mikael, fournisseur de l'armée, en exigeant de lui de signer et de faire signer au clergé Arménien de Mouch. Elles menaçaient toute la communauté de nouveaux désastres si cette demande était refusée.

Le Mazbata était conçu dans les termes suivants :—

Sassoun est un pays montagneux dont les villages sont habités par une population tout à fait sauvage.

Cette population ne paie depuis des années les impôts et les redevances. Elle vit par le produit des vols et des brigandages, qu'elle exerce ouvertement sur les grands chemins.

Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan ayant pitié de l'état déplorable de la pauvre population, qui était toujours calomniée par suite des actes de ces brigands, a bien voulu envoyer une force armée composée de soldats de l'armée régulière et de Kurdes; cette force avait pour mission de châtier les brigands et de les obliger à vivre paisiblement.

Ayant entendu que les journaux Européens, qui publient toujours des mensonges et calomnies, et qui désirent embrouiller les affaires, ont présenté ces incidents sous des couleurs tout à fait différentes, nous déclarons qu'aucun méfait n'a eu lieu.

Il existe encore un troisième Mazbata, qui est colporté par le Commissaire de Police dans les campagnes de Mouch et plus particulièrement dans les villages de Boulanik. Le Commissaire exige de la population de signer cette Pétition. Aux questions que les gens du peuple, par suite de leur ignorance de la langue Turque lui

adressent relativement à son contenu, il répond par une autre question : il demande si le choléra a dernièrement ravagé leur pays ; si on lui répond qu'aucun cas de choléra n'a été constaté, il déclare que la Pétition est un démenti de l'apparition de choléra dans le village, et qu'il faut la signer pour sauver le pays des rigueurs des quarantaines ; dans le cas d'une réponse affirmative relativement à l'apparition de la maladie, le Commissaire répond que la Pétition relate le degré d'intensité de la maladie et le nombre des morts et qu'en le signant on implorera les soins paternels du Gouvernement Impérial. La pauvre population est presque toujours dupe de ces mensonges.

Nos pertes sont beaucoup plus importantes que nous n'avions cru primitivement. Le district de Sassoun et de Talori contient plus de quarante villages. Chaque village est composé au minimum de 150 maisons. Suivant nos usages antiques les familles sont réunies sous le même toit, de sorte que la population mâle de chaque habitation comprend presque toujours de soixante-dix à quatre-vingts personnes. Chaque maison avait un troupeau de 1,000 à 2,000 moutons. Tout cela a été perdu. Au lendemain des désastres nous avions évalué le nombre des morts à 10,000, nous avions cru que plusieurs avaient réussi de fuir et de se réfugier du côté de Diarbékir. Pourtant les dernières nouvelles montrent que beaucoup n'ont pu échapper au massacre.

Pour ne parler que de ma famille, des soixante-sept personnes qui la composaient, moi et mon neveu seul restons. Tous les autres ont disparu.

Pour se faire une idée de nos mœurs d'habitation, il faut savoir qu'il arrive souvent de marier un jeune homme et une jeune fille dans la même maison ; cela montre le degré de parenté éloigné qui existe entre les gens réunis sous le même toit.

Actuellement, il y a 40,000 personnes disparues. Il se peut que quelques-unes aient pu échapper, mais la plus grande majorité est morte.

Les Pachas nous ont demandé la quantité de nos pertes d'âmes. Nous avons déclaré que nous avions perdu 10,000 personnes, parmi lesquelles nombre de femmes et d'enfants. En entendant ce chiffre, les Pachas ont montré un grand étonnement. Ils ont dit que, d'après les statistiques officielles le nombre total des populations Arméniennes de la localité était de 80,000. Ils croyaient impossible que la moitié soit perdue.

Nous devons dire qu'à peine un percepteur venait chaque deux années faire le dénombrement des habitants et les troupeaux de nos villages. Nous avions toujours l'habitude de payer une somme de £T. 70 à £T. 80 à titre de "lakehich" que le fonctionnaire acceptait pour montrer le nombre des habitants et des moutons en quantité moindre que l'évaluation précédente.

Comme nous n'épargnions rien pour vivre en bonne intelligence avec les troupes régulières et la gendarmerie qui venaient dans nos pays, et procurions gratuitement en dehors des règlements, l'orge, l'avoine, et les fourrages nécessaires à leurs chevaux. Ces troupes nous protégeaient contre les incursions des Kurdes, et, grâce à cette protection, nos richesses avaient augmentées d'une manière régulière.

Peut-être le Gouvernement, dans le but de justifier les massacres, prétextera-t-il que nous sommes en révolte. Cette allégation est une pure calomnie. La preuve la plus éclatante en est que dernièrement encore, quand les troupes régulières se trouvaient dans nos montagnes, l'autorité militaire a demandé et obtenu de nous des moutons et autres bestiaux. Le reçu constatant la remise de ces bestiaux est actuellement gardé chez nous. Une population en révolte ne fournit pas des vivres aux troupes, le simple fait de notre empressement à nourrir la force régulière prouve que nous étions en parfait état de calme.

Inclosure 2 in No. 133.

LIST of the Villages of Sassoon and of Kharzan.—(Communicated by the Armenian Patriarch, January 31, 1895.)

Noms des Villages.	Nombre des Maisons.	Noms des Villages.	Nombre des Maisons.
1. Gifirnaf	50	28. Mélkagh	110
2. Cop	60	29. Tdenk	75
3. Totzank	30	30. Engouzig	20
4. Kéghaehen	40	31. Héghine	45
5. Chouchnamerg	80	32. Nerkine-Héghine	20
6. Semal	60	33. Kégher-vank	80
7. Shénék	110	34. Guélégarz	10
8. Alipatzik .. .. }	400	35. Helakan	25
9. Guélégouzan .. .. }		36. Chenist	50
10. Aghpi	20	37. Taletzor	35
11. Seravank	10	38. Ochond	60
12. Tekhik	10	39. Derbank	50
13. Guélérash	20	40. Herquiri	35
14. Ghellegnénen	25	41. Birin	350
15. Tapi	20	42. Gushkeshenk	25
16. Hitenk	100	43. Khist-Khank	28
17. Engath	25	44. Kezank	30
18. Ispezuni	45	45. Kouan	45
19. Khoisads-vank	35	46. Hartek	25
20. Koumtz-vank	18	47. Hergerk	30
21. Kerdjanank	60	48. Metchrén	30
22. Dalvori (Taleri)	700	49. Guelank	45
23. Tchekkentzar	30	50. Marghenk	18
24. Pori	20	51. Tatzi	150
25. Tovallink	30	52. Pevi	15
26. Khentzorig	75		3,729
27. Cazerink	150		

Observation.—Suivant les mœurs antiques du pays chaque maison contient de 100 à 30 âmes.

No. 134.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February 6.*)

(No. 86.)

My Lord, *Pera, February 2, 1895.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 43 of to-day's date, I have the honour to inclose copy of a note which I have received from Said Pasha, repeating the decision of the Ottoman Government to refuse permission to foreign newspaper correspondents to travel in Asia Minor for the present.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

P.S.—I have also the honour to transmit herewith my note to the Sublime Porte to which the above document is a reply.

P. C.

Inclosure 1 in No. 134.

Sir P. Currie to Said Pasha.

M. le Ministre, *January 30, 1895.*

IT appears from the communications which have passed between Her Majesty's Embassy and the Sublime Porte during the last few days that it is the intention of the Ottoman Government to prohibit all travelling on the part of British subjects in certain parts of Asia Minor during the continuance of the Sassoon inquiry.

I am led to this conclusion by the course which has been taken by the authorities at Aleppo with the approval of the Porte in regard to Mr. Markham, as well as by the replies given by your Excellency to the verbal representations which I have made

on his behalf, and further by the message sent yesterday to Mr. Block by his Highness the Grand Vizier in regard to the presence at Trebizond of Major Barlow and Mr. Hodgetts.

Such interference with the liberty enjoyed from time immemorial under the Treaties by British subjects of coming and going freely in the Sultan's dominions cannot fail to excite much attention in England, and it becomes my duty to place at once before my Government a clear statement of the course which the Imperial Government has decided to take in the matter.

I have accordingly the honour to request your Excellency to be good enough to inform me at your earliest convenience what is the exact nature of the restriction which it is intended to impose on the movements of British subjects, and to what districts those restrictions are applicable.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 134.

Said Pasha to Sir P. Currie.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Le 1er Février*, 1895.

EN réponse à la note que votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser le 30 Janvier dernier j'ai l'honneur de lui exposer les considérations suivantes:

Vous connaissez parfaitement, M. l'Ambassadeur, les commentaires de tout genre qui se produisent journellement au sujet des incidents de Sassoun, et j'aime à espérer que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique a su apprécier à sa haute valeur le désir sincère du Gouvernement Impérial d'entourer la Commission d'Enquête de toutes les garanties de justice et d'impartialité.

Dans cette occurrence et au moment où nous tenons à voir le plus tôt possible la vérité se faire jour, venir autoriser l'accès dans l'Asie-Mineure des correspondants de journaux Anglais en donnant ainsi libre cours à des investigations fantaisistes, à des renseignements plus ou moins erronés ou exagérés et puisés très probablement à des sources ignorantes ou intéressées, serait non seulement donner l'essor à toute espèce de dépêches et lettres à dresser à l'étranger, en offrant en même temps l'occasion aux agents des autres organes de la presse Européenne d'accourir à leur tour sur les lieux et de grossir ainsi le cortège de toutes ces correspondances de particuliers, mais encore ne tendrait à rien moins qu'à fausser l'opinion publique en Europe avant que le verdict de la Commission d'Enquête soit rendu, et paralyser de la sorte les efforts impartiaux de cette dernière en frappant de stérilité son œuvre.

Dès lors, nous sommes en droit de ne point autoriser, pour le moment, la présence dans l'Asie-Mineure les correspondants de journaux étrangers, et je suis persuadé que votre Excellence, dans son esprit éminemment éclairé ne manquera pas de se rallier à toutes ces considérations d'ordre intérieur et moral et de constater une fois de plus que la mesure que j'ai eu l'honneur d'énoncer ci-dessus ne saurait être interprétée comme étant de nature à apporter la moindre entrave aux mouvements des sujets Britanniques ce qui, d'ailleurs, est bien loin de la pensée du Gouvernement Impérial.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) SAID.

No. 135.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 50 A.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 6*, 1895.

AT an interview I had on the 4th instant with Rustem Pasha he expressed the hope that the question which had been raised by your Excellency concerning the decision to forbid British subjects, and especially correspondents of newspapers, to enter the district where the inquiry as to the alleged outrages upon Armenians is now going on would not give rise to any further representations to the Porte.

I expressed to his Excellency my regret that it had been determined to maintain this prohibition, as I was convinced that though there might be some inconvenience from the presence of a large number of newspaper correspondents from all quarters, it would have been far more advantageous to the interests of Turkey to have admitted

them freely. I said I would consider whether it would be necessary to make any further representations, and to-day I informed his Excellency that while I maintained the opinion I had already expressed to him as to the impolicy of the prohibition, I did not propose to give you further instructions on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 136.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 7.)

(No. 46.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 7*, 1895, 8 P.M.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 14 in regard to the Armoudan prisoners, I have the honour to state that fifty-three were condemned on the following charges: Murdering two men and wounding one, because they had given information to the authorities; murdering and burning the body of a Government official. The Grand Vizier who communicated to me the above information, which had just been received from the Governor of Erzingham, added that the prisoners subsequently retired to the mountains, where they remained in revolt, robbing the Kaïmakam, and resisting the gendarmes and soldiers for a day and a-half. Twenty-six were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and hard labour, six to perpetual hard labour, and twenty-one were condemned to death.

In regard to the representation to the Porte, I shall await your Lordship's instructions.

No. 137.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 51.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 7*, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 48 of the 19th ultimo, forwarding a scheme which you have drawn up as a basis for reforms in the Armenian provinces of Turkey.

I have no objection to your Excellency discussing these proposals with your French and Russian colleagues, informing them also of the views of the Armenian Patriarch, reported in your Excellency's despatch No. 56 of the 22nd ultimo.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 138.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 52.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 7*, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 53 of the 22nd ultimo, forwarding a report from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum as to the desirability of obtaining the evidence before the Sassoon Commission of Inquiry of Edhem Pasha and certain other Turkish officers.

If your Excellency's efforts to communicate with Edhem Pasha continue to be unsuccessful, there seems to be strong ground for addressing an application to the Porte to produce that officer as a witness.

Your Excellency will use your discretion as to the best moment for making the application, and will no doubt think it right to communicate with your French and Russian colleagues on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 139.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 47.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 8, 1895, 3 P.M.*

MR. GRAVES telegraphed to me yesterday that the Vali of Erzeroum had, in the presence of the Dragoman of his Consulate, informed Messrs. Dillon and Scudamore that their passports, though duly *visé* for the destinations to which they intended to proceed, were of no value, as orders had been sent from Constantinople to the civil and military authorities that no foreigners whatever would be allowed to travel in the interior.

No. 140.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 48.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 8, 1895, 2·30 P.M.*

My telegram to your Lordship No. 47.

Mr. Scudamore represents a Syndicate of provincial newspapers, and Mr. Dillon is the correspondent of the "Daily Graphic." They left Constantinople before the Porte had issued orders to stop correspondents, and succeeded in getting through to Erzeroum. On my instructions, a Dragoman of the Embassy called upon the Grand Vizier, and, after reading the substance of Mr. Graves' telegram, pointed out to his Highness that if the movements of unoffending British travellers are interfered with, serious consequences may ensue.

The reply of the Grand Vizier was to the effect that the Ottoman Government had, as I was aware, decided, after mature consideration, to exclude from Asia Minor, while the Commission of Inquiry is sitting, all correspondents of newspapers. The Government, added his Highness, could not depart from this decision.

Shortly after Messrs. Scudamore and Dillon had left there arrived at Trebizond Major Parlow, R.A., who is not connected with a newspaper and Mr. Hodgetts, of the "Graphic." Permission to proceed was refused to them, and, by orders of the Porte, 30*l.* was paid to each in compensation, which was the amount claimed on their behalf by Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond.

No. 141.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 37.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February 8, 1895.*

I HAVE received your telegram No. 46 of yesterday, giving the particulars furnished by the Grand Vizier as to the sentences passed on the Armenian prisoners at Erzinghian.

If the inaccurate information forwarded by Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum was supplied to him by Turkish officials, I consider that Her Majesty's Government have grounds for complaint.

It is scarcely creditable that twenty-one of the prisoners were so deeply implicated as to deserve a death sentence, even assuming that there is really sufficient evidence upon which to convict them, and experience justifies grave doubts on this point.

I request you to inform the Grand Vizier that the question has aroused considerable attention in this country, and that a most unfortunate effect will be created by the exercise of any undue severity.

Express at the same time the hope of Her Majesty's Government that, before any of the sentences are confirmed, both they and the judicial proceedings will be carefully revised.

No. 142.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 9.)

(No. 49.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 9, 1895, 2·30 P.M.*

THE Ministry of Justice have during the last few years sent orders that all cases of Armenian sedition should be treated with severity, but after inquiry I cannot find that any such Circular as that referred to in your Lordship's telegram No. 15 of the 4th February has been issued.

No. 143.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 9.)

(No. 50.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 9, 1895, 2·20 P.M.*

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphed yesterday from Moush that the Commission had now held twelve sittings, devoting the greater part of their time to examining Government witnesses and official documents with a view to proving—

1. That a state of open rebellion existed among the Armenians.
2. That in every case the Armenians had been the aggressors, and not the Kurds.
3. That the Armenians committed acts of revolting barbarity against the Mahommedans.

Up till that time the Commission had heard only one witness on the Armenian side. This witness, a man of the name of Ereo, was summoned at the suggestion of the Delegates. His body still bore the marks of recent wounds, and he stated that he had witnessed the massacring of women and children by the troops, and that members of his own family had so perished.

The Commissioners evidently felt the damaging effect of the last witness' evidence, as a few days afterwards a cousin of Ereo, named Serkiss, was summoned. This man had been transferred, with other inhabitants of Sheuik, to a village three hours distant from Moush.

He contradicted the evidence given by Ereo that the troops had massacred certain of his (Serkiss') children; they had died, he said, from the effects of their flight.

The Delegates requested that these two witnesses should be confronted, and Ereo, while maintaining the truth of his evidence, added that the authorities had bribed Serkiss, and that the room in which the Commission was sitting would be thronged with petitioners were it not for the fact that the road was barred to them.

Serkiss, on the other hand, contradicted himself, and gave most unsatisfactory evidence.

The Commission, instead of following the matter up, proceeded to call fresh witnesses, with a view to casting discredit on such of the principal survivors as had been mentioned by Ereo as being likely by their evidence to throw fuller light on the events under consideration.

The Delegates therefore suggested that, in view of the divergence in the evidence of the two witnesses, Ereo and Serkiss, on points of the highest importance, and of Serkiss' statement that they might find at a village only three hours from Moush a large number of the inhabitants of Sheuik, the Commission should proceed thither without delay and examine these people. They would thus render it impossible for accusations of any undue influence to be levelled against them.

The following day the Commissioners, adducing among other reasons the necessity of adhering to the order of proceeding, as already laid down, refused to adopt the suggestion of the Delegates.

No. 144.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 9.)

(No. 51.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 9, 1895, 7·15 P.M.*

ARMOUDAN prisoners.

With reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 17 of to-day's date, the Grand Vizier, to whom I represented this matter this afternoon, promised to recommend the

Minister of Justice to examine the case with care. His Highness said that as the sentences would be referred to the Court of Cassation, and through himself to the Sultan, there was no danger of their being carried out at present.

No. 145.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 9.)

(No. 52.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 9, 1895, 7·25 P.M.*

THE Ambassadors met yesterday to discuss the question of the insecurity of the streets caused by insufficiency of police and undisciplined conduct of soldiers, and decided to send their Dragomans to the Porte to call attention to the present state of affairs.

The Porte, in reply, assures us that the question is now being considered by a Commission, and promises to communicate to us the measures to be adopted. They have already taken certain remedial measures.

No. 145*.

Sir M. Durand to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 10.)

(No. 6.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, February 10, 1895.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 4, I have the honour to report that Mr. Paton left Tabreez for Urumiah yesterday morning to collect information respecting the Armenian massacres.

No. 146.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 87.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 4, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, in which he reviews the affairs of the Vilayet of Trebizond during the past year.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 146.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, January 25, 1895.*

A DIARY kept at this Consulate on public events, police news, administrative measures, &c., enables me to review in this fifth Annual Report the affairs of the Trebizond Vilayet in 1894.

In my last of the series I spoke favourably of the Governor-General, Cadri Bey; I may also do so here. His Excellency, who has now been in trust for nearly three years, has doubtless done much towards ameliorating the condition of the country. Slow but sure were his steps in this direction, thwarted though they were by the Central Government. Were it not, indeed, for this irksome, if not needless interference, greater progress would have been attained. In vain the Vali complained against the existing system of referring almost everything to the capital; more than this, his remonstrances last year met with a private hint not to conduct himself like a second Midhat Pasha.

The Porte would do well, I think, to invest with greater discretionary powers such provincial Governors as are of proved honesty and efficiency.

Cadri Bey is perhaps most to be complimented on his sound and sensible policy towards the Armenians.

The course taken by him in this connection may be described as that of watchfulness attended by moderation and justice.

Armenian agitators and Armenian informers were not wanting in the province; but the seditions of the former and the intrigues of the latter were estimated by his Excellency at their true value. He gave little scope to racial feelings or to hasty conjectures, knowing full well that these people, as a whole, when unmolested, are as peace-loving as they are industrious and intelligent. Were it not for misgovernment, he understood, only the demented among them would contemplate, however vainly, the possibility of subverting Ottoman rule. Ill-treatment simply goaded them to despair, and gained them the sympathies of civilized countries. There would be no Armenian question, he thought, had others remembered that even a worm would turn when struck, rather than the popular saying, "Fresh hay gets burnt with dry."

To distinguish the guilty from the innocent, however, is no easy matter in a country where the governing and the governed are so greatly addicted to misrepresentation, and where fanaticism, corruption, and terrorism are not yet evils of the past. At Trebizond itself the Vali could and did exercise a wholesome influence. He not only kept in check the corrupt and the over-zealous officials, but relegated to the waste-paper basket many an anonymous letter against Armenians. It is indeed thanks to the Vali mainly that no political indictments had their origin at Trebizond, where the suspects from the Samsoon district (as reported by me) underwent their conclusive trials with exceptional justice, ending in the acquittal of twelve, and the condemnation of one to fifteen, two to ten, and two to five years' imprisonment with hard labour.

Let me try to illustrate here by a few instances Cadri Bey's method of procedure in political charges. To do so, however, I must first draw attention to the fact that almost all the accusers were themselves Armenians in these parts, actuated or not by selfish motives, sordid interests, or vindictive feelings. Unlike the Greeks, indeed, this particular race of people are oftener carried away apparently by personal considerations than by political sentiments or national aspirations.

1. In March last a box containing prohibited books and seditious papers came from Batoum to the address of the Russian subject Dermarounkian, the then Head Master of the Armenian school at Trebizond. Although appointed in August 1893, against the advice and wishes of the Vali, his Excellency did nothing more in this than have the individual quietly dismissed by the Armenian Bishop and expelled by the Russian Consul.

2. In April last a half-finished signal gun was discovered by the police in an Armenian foundry at Trebizond. The owner and his two workmen (one a Moslem) were arrested, but soon released, while a Turk, the master of a sailing-vessel, was kept in prison for ordering it without a Government licence.

3. In May last a certain Agop, an Armenian of Baiburt, age 50, who had become a Moslem, and had married a Turkish woman at Ofi, was arrested for collecting illegally money among the villagers of Surmeneh. He stated in defence that, fearing the anger of the Armenians for having embraced Islamism, he endeavoured to conciliate them by raising funds for the Revolutionary Committee, a list of whose local members he fabricated for the information of the authorities. The Vali curtly told him that the Yemen, where there are no Armenians to molest him, is the only fit place for such a proselyte, and without further ado had him deported to Constantinople.

4. In October last a young Armenian was soon enough found innocent, though an official of his own race and religion misconstrued the wording of a letter of introduction to his father in Russia, recommending a friend as a "politicali adam," though, with the termination "li," the meaning in Turkish is a polite, and not a political, man.

Two telegraphic inquiries made by the Porte may also be mentioned here. They tend to show an amazing degree of callousness and of ignorance in those at the head of the State with regard to the sufferings of the Armenian people.

About the middle of October the Erzeroum post was attacked on Mount Zighana, and the Minister of the Interior wired to know whether any Armenians were implicated in the robbery. That the Vali replied promptly in the negative compares favourably with the course taken in a similar occurrence at Tokad, in the Sivas Vilayet.

This is one; now the other:—

The instructions given to Field-Marshal Zekki Pasha were officially communicated to Cadri Bey. They were in the sense that the insurrection in the Bitlis Vilayet was to

be suppressed by the Imperial troops with as little bloodshed as possible. Fate, however, appears to have decided otherwise, and when the European press got an inkling of the sad events in the Sasoon district of that inland province, the Governor-General of Trebizond received a Ministerial telegram asking him what truth there was in a Reuter's report of a massacre of Armenians at Samsoon, which is on this coast and in this vilayet.

Some particulars of the Governors of the Trebizond Vilayet are given in the annexed Table. The three Mutessarifs may be said to enjoy a reputation for honesty, without asserting that they display any very great activeness in public affairs. The ones at Rizeh and Gumushaneh had in 1892 little unusual work to do, while Nouri Pasha at Samsoon has, perhaps, done fairly well in somewhat trying circumstances connected with Armenian troubles in his own town and in that of Charshamba.

The eighteen Kaimakams had occasionally to be reminded of their duties, as well as the twenty-four Nudirs, but, with the exception of one, none of them proved themselves vexed or refractory enough for dismissal. The exception is Missa Pasha, Sub-Governor of Charshamba, whose conduct was such that both the Mutessarif of Samsoon and the Vali of Trebizond pointed out the necessity of his dismissal, but patronized as he is by Circassian friends and relatives at Yildiz, their representations have hitherto been disregarded.

The behaviour of the soldiery was most exemplary up to the end of the year, when they began to display a few symptoms of rowdyism, which may or may not have arisen from anything more than a mere relaxation of discipline. Lieutenant-General Ahmed Hamdi Pasha at Trebizond, aided by Major-General Mendereh Pasha at Samsoon, and Major-General Mehmed Salih Pasha at Rizeh, commands the troops in this vilayet under the orders of his brother-in-law, Zekki Pasha, at Erzeroum.

The Gendarmerie, headed by Colonel Suleyman Agá (an active, honest, but illiterate old Laz, receiving as yearly pay £ T. 300), have done extremely well during the year, though their number, as seen in the annexed Table, was reduced by 302 men. The recent organization of night-watchmen, paid by the people but controlled by the authorities, will, happily, be able to relieve this very insufficient force of its more arduous nocturnal duties.

The police is not exactly what it ought to be; Djafer Effendi, the Commissary-in-chief, is reported to be more active than honest. From a simple lieutenancy he attained to this post, which gives him many a chance of adding to his stipend of £ T. 84 a-year.

Another Commissary, Ibdi Mehmed by name, followed his example a little too openly at Kerassond, and has consequently been recalled.

The difficulty, of course, is to prove a case of bribery, as the law in Turkey very conveniently provides a punishment of from three to fifteen years' imprisonment, as much for the giver as for the receiver and the go-between.

The proceedings of the Judicial Courts would have been more satisfactory if less protracted. In all of them, however, justice was administered with but little partiality, especially so in the Criminal Court of Appeal, presided over by Hamdi Bey, a middle-aged Kurd, transferred in February 1892 from Yanina, who is said to be exceptionally honest, living strictly within his official income of £ T. 420 a-year. The Public Prosecutor, Ghalib Bey, a Turk of Constantinople, may deserve, but does not enjoy, as good a reputation.

In the annexed Table the number of individuals sentenced during the year to different terms of imprisonment is given, together with the number of prisoners at Trebizond on the 31st December, 1891. The other two Returns contain information on acts of brigandage and murder. It is noteworthy that the power of the Derebeys has at length been broken. These unruly landlords, the descendants of feudal ancestors, have been offered the choice of a peaceful or a prison life. A few were killed, some incarcerated, and the rest having given up their nefarious practices, their native country (especially Lazistan) may be now said to have entered on an era of public security unknown for ages.

I will not lengthen out this retrospective view of affairs by giving fuller details or by repeating what has already been reported in previous despatches, but will end by saying that should all the vilayets be governed like that of Trebizond, one would hear little of Turkish misrule.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Return of Governors in the Province of Trebizond.

	Residence.		Name.	Origin.	Age.	Last Post.	Present Post.	Date of Appointment.	Yearly Salary.	Remarks.
	District.	Town.							£ T.	
I.	Trebizond ..	Trebizond ..	Cadri Bey	Constantinople ..	50	Constantinople ..	Vali	May 1892	1,800	An exceptionally good Governor. Was formerly connected with the Treasury, having twice been Sub-Minister of Finance. Has seen no European country, and knows no European language. Is honest, kind-hearted, and hard-working.
1	Ort	Ort	Ahmedzadé Hussein Bey ..	Trebizond ..	45	Platana ..	Kaimakam ..	July 1893	144	Considered good. Pacified his region and said its tithes well.
2	Soreneieh ..	Samsoon ..	Mustafa Rifaat Bey ..	Constantinople ..	33	Enos	.. ..	Dec. 1894	144	Has as yet made no mark for himself.
3	Akdjabad ..	Platana ..	Ismaeglu M. Zia Pasha ..	Trebizond ..	50	Ort	.. ..	June 1893	140	Considered efficient. Disliked by the local Beys, which speaks well of him.
4	Vakfkébir ..	Fol	Nihat Effendi	Constantinople ..	30	.. ..	.. ..	Sept. 1892	120	Considered both active and honest.
5	Ghurtélé ..	Eléssoun ..	Shakir Bey	.. ..	45	Ordou ..	.. ..	Nov. 1894	120	Failed as a Governor, and is about to resign.
6	Tireboli ..	Tireboli ..	Ibsen Bey	.. ..	30	Alijora ..	.. ..	Sept. 1891	150	Avoids giving trouble.
7	Kerassond ..	Kerassond ..	Ali Nevzat Bey ..	Yanina ..	35	Eudered ..	.. ..	Feb. 1891	200	Is thought capable, but too amiable. Related to Khalil Bey, Vali of Sivas.
8	Ordou	Ordou	Mehmed Roshdi ..	Constantinople ..	33	Ghurtélé ..	.. ..	Nov. 1894	200	Considered active and intelligent. Knows French slightly. Reported to be honest. Is affable in character. Knows Greek.
II.	Djanik	Samsoon ..	Mustafa Nouri Pasha ..	Crete ..	45	Chio	Mutessarif ..	July 1893	900	Is Abedin Pasha's son-in-law and Sirri Pasha's brother.
1	Fatza	Fatza	Sinterzade Mehmed ..	Trebizond ..	45	Ghurtélé ..	Kaimakam ..	Jan. 1894	120	Ignorant, but energetic. Cousin to Trebizond Mayor.
2	Unieh	Unieh	Ibrahim Bey	Larissiate ..	45	Tireboli ..	.. ..	Dec. 1893	144	Corrupt and quarrelsome. About to be transferred to Passin, in Erzeroum Vilayet.
3	Tiorneh ..	Tiorneh ..	Ibnim Effendi	Constantinople ..	40	Constantinople ..	.. ..	June 1893	120	Considered honest and active.
4	Charshamba ..	Charshamba ..	Moussa Pasha	Circassian ..	40	.. ..	.. ..	Nov. 1891	144	Corrupt, illiterate, and unmanageable. Protected by friends at Yildiz.
5	Rizeh	Rizeh	Redjebzadé Kiamil ..	Kurdish ..	35	.. ..	.. ..	Dec. 1893	144	Said to be upright; known to be active.
III.	Lazistan	Rizeh	Assef Pasha	Constantinople ..	50	Arabi ..	Mutessarif ..	July 1893	720	Speaks French, and is liked. No initiative; refers affairs to Trebizond.
1	Atina	Atina	Shevki Effendi	.. ..	45	Ardin	Kaimakam ..	Jan. 1891	144	Does fairly well.
2	Khoppa	Khoppa	Riza Effendi	Laz	40	.. ..	.. ..	Oct. 1893	144	Is thought corrupt, but gives little trouble.
IV.	Gumushana ..	Gumushana ..	Mehmed Shefki Bey ..	Constantinople ..	30	Siam	Mutessarif ..	Jan. 1891	540	Honest and steady. A great reader. Acquainted with French, English, Italian. Travelled in Europe. Served in the Diplomatic Service.
1	Torul	Ardasa	Ahmed Riza Bey ..	Castamoni ..	30	Tripoli ..	Kaimakam ..	Sept. 1893	144	Known best for arresting deserters and collecting arrears.
2	Sheyran	Sheyran	Ali Riza	Laz	45	Hoppa	.. ..	Jan. 1894	144	Illiterate, but energetic.
3	Kélkit	Kélkit	Mehmed Effendi ..	.. .. ..	50	Platana ..	.. ..	June 1893	144	Said to be ignorant, idle, and vulgar.

Police and Gendarmerie in the Trebizond Province.

Year.	Police.			Gendarmes.						
	Officers.	Men.	Total.	Officers.	Foot.	Horse.	Total.	Killed.	Wounded.	Rewarded.
1890	5	29	34	49	930	190	1,175	3	3	74
1891	5	19	24	49	786	190	1,025	..	3	35
1892	6	26	32	49	930	190	1,270	2	2	18
1893	6	30	36	49	985	190	1,350	1	3	12
1894	6	35	41	49	809	190	1,048	2	1	8

Number of Prisoners and of Condemnations at Trebizond.

Year.	Number in Gaol.			Condemnations.				
	Moslem.	Christian.	Total.	1–5.	5–10.	10–15.	Life.	Total.
1890	267	17	284	13	12	23	6	54
1891	308	12	320	3	3	22	2	30
1892	259	15	274	5	4	10	..	19
1893	287	16	303	5	6	66	2	79
1894	310	36	346	27	9	25	3	64

Murders committed in the Trebizond District.

Year.	In Brigandage.	In Burglary.	In Vendetta.	In Debauchery.	Total.
1890	3	2	6	3	11
1891	2	..	..	3	5
1892	4	3	2	4	13
1893	3	7	5	4	19
1894	1	5	2	2	10

Brigands killed and captured in the Trebizond District.

Year.	Killed.	Captured.	Total.
1890	15	94	109
1891	11	156	167
1892	19	122	141
1893	15	92	107
1894	19	88	107

No. 147.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 11.)

(No. 89.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 4, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 51 of the 21st ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora, in regard to the movements of Turkish troops.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 147.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Angora, January* 29, 1895.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 23rd instant, received yesterday, I have the honour to return the observations of the Military Attaché of Her Majesty's Embassy on the information forwarded in my despatch of the 11th instant, on the subject of the movements of Turkish troops.

I beg leave to add that the two squadrons of cavalry men referred to in my above-mentioned despatch as having left Constantinople clandestinely, were conveyed to Ismidt by sea, and they marched on foot to Ada-Bazar.

Further information, since received, is to the effect that a few days after their arrival at Ada-Bazar, and when all the men had been mounted and furnished with swords, but not with uniforms, one squadron left suddenly at night, for some unknown destination, and the other one was, up to four days ago, still at Ada-Bazar awaiting marching orders.

I hope to be able to follow the movements of one at least of these flying columns, and I shall duly inform your Excellency if I hear anything more about either.

With regard to time-expired men, some 2,000 have been brought here by train in the course of the last six weeks, but there does not appear to have been any attempt to conceal their movements. They were still wearing their uniforms and gradually dispersed to their homes.

Those that had belonged to the Palace garrison were the only ones conveyed by a special train which arrived at night. Their uniforms had the appearance of being quite new, and they were loud in their praises of the treatment received at Constantinople. Not so those from the Yémen (? 7th) Army Corps, some of whom were heard to say that they would sooner sell everything they possessed and purchase their exemption rather than go through another term of service among the unruly Arabs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 148.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 11.)

(No. 90.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 5, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that Abdullah Pasha, Honorary Aide-de-camp to the Sultan and General of Division on the Staff, formerly President of the Sassoon Commission, has been appointed Second General of Division on His Imperial Majesty's personal Staff.

This appointment gives Abdullah Pasha the second place in the large and growing military Secretariat at Yildiz, where a great deal of business properly appertaining to the War Office is transacted; he becomes immediately subordinate to

Ferik Shakir Pasha, and thus, while obtaining an influential position, he himself is under the strictest surveillance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 149.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 91.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 5, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 69 of the 28th ultimo I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the alleged poisoning of an Armenian in Van prison.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 149.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, January 23, 1895.*

WITH reference to my Confidential despatch of the 16th instant, I have the honour to transmit copies of a further despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, in which Mr. Hallward reports having drawn the attention of the Vali Bahri Pasha to the alleged poisoning of the Armenian prisoner, Karrekin Paghestsian, in prison.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 149.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, January 14, 1895.*

A FEW days ago I mentioned to the Vali that I had heard that Karrekin Paghestsian, as reported in my despatch of the 8th instant, had been poisoned in prison. He accordingly sent for him and asked him whether this was true. The prisoner gave him an evasive answer, which rather led me to believe that it was true.

The Vali, of course, denied the possibility of such a thing, and asked what object the Government could have in poisoning him as he was safe in prison.

The answer to that question is that though the prisoner has already been condemned to ten years' imprisonment, the authorities are not satisfied with that, but have been trying to implicate him in the Kurubash murder case. It may be that they have decided not to press this charge, especially as sentence has already been passed in the said murder case, or that the present moment is not considered favourable for hanging an Armenian, and that, therefore, it was considered preferable to dispose of him in another way.

It is impossible for me to prove or disprove a thing of this sort with absolute certainty, but, according to my information, he was seized after eating with violent sickness, and seeing some powder on part of his food he suspected that he had been poisoned, and prevailed on a zaptieh to bring him an antidote. He is chained up in solitary confinement, so that the police have little fear of publicity in dealing with him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 150.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 14.)

(No. 92.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 5, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the demand by the European Delegates on the Sassoon Commission for the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis, and of the reply of the Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 150.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, January 25, 1895.*

I HAD the honour to transmit to your Excellency by telegraph this day a telegram addressed to me by Mr. Shipley, dated the 24th January, reporting that on that day, at the first sitting of the Bitlis Commission at Moush, the Delegates presented a demand to the President of the Commission for the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis during the proceedings of the Commission, in accordance with the identic instructions received by them from their respective Ambassadors. Your Excellency's telegram containing those instructions for Mr. Shipley was marked No. 3 of the 10th instant.

The President of the Commission, after having deliberated with his colleagues in a separate room, returned and informed the Delegates that the Commissioners, in view of their instructions, and of the powers conferred upon them by the Sultan's Commission, did not see any necessity for the suspension of Tahsin Pasha, in order to secure a free and impartial inquiry, but that they would transmit the request of the Delegates to the Porte for the information of the latter.

My colleagues having received similar telegrams in the course of the night, a meeting of Consuls was held this morning at the Russian Consulate-General, at which we agreed to telegraph to our Ambassadors in similar terms, stating that we considered it absolutely necessary that the Porte should accede at once to the demand of our Delegates for Tahsin Pasha's suspension, which had been made in obedience to identic instructions from the three Ambassadors. I did not think it necessary to repeat the reasons for this belief, as your Excellency is already fully acquainted with them.

We also agreed to inquire whether the Turkish Commissioners were entitled to hold secret deliberations apart from the Delegates during the proceedings of the Commission, that course appearing to us to be irregular, and whether it would not be well that the Ambassadors should send direct orders by telegraph to the Delegates to take no further part in the proceedings of the Commission pending the suspension of the Governor-General.

In another telegram of the same date, Mr. Shipley informed me that the Delegates had agreed, whilst profiting by any outside information which they may obtain, to make no use of it before the Commission unless previously agreed as to the desirability of so doing.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 151.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 93.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 4, 1895.*

MUNIR BEY called upon me yesterday, by order of the Sultan, and read a report received by His Majesty from the Governor of Bitlis as to the movements of the foreign Delegates at Moush.

It appeared that they had visited the principal Armenian institutions, and an Armenian village, and had also called upon several Armenians, one of whom was

spoken of as a suspected individual, and that they had declined to be accompanied by a zaptieh whose services were placed at their disposal.

On my inquiring the object of this communication, Munir Bey said that His Majesty thought it was to be regretted that the Delegates should, by their proceedings, give cause for suspicion that they had a leaning towards the Armenians, and would be prejudiced by the accounts they would receive from them.

His Majesty hoped that I would recommend the British Delegate to abstain from paying such visits in future.

I said that I would talk the matter over with my Russian and French colleagues, who would, no doubt, receive a similar communication from His Majesty, but that my own opinion was that the Delegates should be left entire liberty to visit such places and persons as they thought fit; that they were not authorized to hold any formal inquiry outside of the Commission, but that it was their business to obtain any information that was accessible to them, and, if they thought fit, to call the attention of the Commission to it, and report it to their Governments; that for this purpose it was indispensable that they should communicate freely with the inhabitants.

Later in the day the Russian and French Ambassadors called upon me, and I found that they had spoken to Munir Bey in nearly the same terms that I had used.

We agreed that it was not necessary to take any further notice of the communication.

Said Pasha also sent me a message on the subject through my Dragoman, to which I gave a reply similar to that which I had already returned to Munir Bey.

I had an opportunity of delivering it verbally to his Excellency, as he called upon me to-day with a conciliatory message from the Sultan, the object of which appeared to be to obtain my support in regard to the exclusion of newspaper correspondents from Asia Minor.

It was, however, couched in very vague terms. In replying to it I pointed out that I had no power of controlling the movements of the correspondents, and I added, in the terms of your Lordship's telegram No. 16, that I had received an instruction not to interfere in the matter, but to leave the full responsibility of it to the Imperial Government.

I added that it was time for the Sultan to make up his mind not only that the events in Sassoon must be thoroughly sifted, but also that serious steps must be taken to ameliorate the condition of his Armenian subjects.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 152.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 95.)
My Lord, *Pera, February 5, 1895.*

MY French colleague has given me the following particulars of an incident which occurred recently at Ismidt, and has attracted considerable attention here.

The monks of an Assumptionist Convent in that town were engaged in repairing the outer wall of their establishment, when they were suddenly ordered by the local authorities to stop, on the ground that they were constructing a chapel.

The monks expostulated; zaptiehs were sent to the convent, and on being refused admittance, broke down the doors, effected a forcible entry and carried off the Superior to the Governor's residence, where he was detained for an hour. On being released, he came to Constantinople and laid his complaint before the Ambassador.

M. Cambon at once made energetic representations to the Porte, demanding the dismissal of the Mutessarif, and announced his intention of sending the French "stationnaire" to Ismidt.

The Porte begged that this threat might not be executed, offered to make reparation, and dismissed the Mutessarif, but the "Pétrel" nevertheless proceeded to Ismidt, where a party of officers and men landed and solemnly reconducted the Superior to his convent.

M. Cambon stated to me that he had told the Porte he found it useless to apply to them for information or redress in cases of outrages being committed in the provinces. In future he should always send his "stationnaire" to the spot, if on the coast, with a member of the Embassy to make inquiries.

If the scene of the outrage was inland, he should still send a member of the Embassy, as he had no trust in the reports of local officials, which invariably took the form of a simple denial of the facts.

The late Mutessarif of Ismidt, who is said to be a fanatical Moslem, has been succeeded by Kiagim Bey, Mutessarif of Bayazid.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 153.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 97.)
My Lord, *Pera, February 6, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a telegram from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the preliminary examination of the history of the Sassoon events, and of my reply to him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 153.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Erzeroum, February 1, 1895.*

MY telegram of 28th January.

My colleagues and I agree in regretting that proposal of Delegates was rejected by Turkish Commissioners, as we consider that the main object of whole inquiry is to prove whether massacres have occurred. The question of responsibility must evidently be considered later. French Delegate telegraphed 31st January that notwithstanding this decision the Turkish Commission that day heard evidence upon the whole of the Sassoon occurrences of a witness proposed by Delegates.

Inclosure 2 in No. 153.

Sir P. Currie to Consul Graves.

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February 4, 1895.*

YOUR telegram of 1st February.

I agree with you as to the final objects of the inquiry, but I see no objection to the preliminary examination of the history of the Sassoon events, which I understand to have been decided upon by the Turkish Commissioners. The Russian and French Ambassadors are sending a similar telegram to their Consuls.

No. 154.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 18.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February 11, 1895.*

THE report from Mr. Shipley of the proceedings of the Sassoon Commission, contained in your Excellency's telegram No. 50 of the 9th instant, is very unsatisfactory.

If the Commissions overrule the suggestions of the Delegates in matters which are important for eliciting the truth in regard to the occurrences in Sassoon, it will be necessary for Her Majesty's Government to consider what measures they shall take to prevent their becoming accessories to what will be no more than a mere deception.

Your Excellency should consult the French and Russian Ambassadors as to the desirability of some warning being given to the Turkish Government.

No. 155.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 58.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 11, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 69 of the 28th ultimo, forwarding despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum and Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van in regard to the alleged ill-treatment and poisoning of Karekin Paghestsian and other Armenians imprisoned at Van.

Mr. Hallward's despatch reveals a most deplorable state of things both in regard to the prisons and the Courts of the Vilayet, and it seems worthy of consideration whether the general substance of his statements should not be mentioned to the Porte. But I must leave it to your Excellency to judge whether this would lead to any useful result.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 156.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 59.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 11, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 67 of the 28th ultimo, inclosing despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo relative to affairs in the districts of Marash and Zeitun.

It would be desirable that you should bring to the notice of the Porte the reputation which Shahan Efendi, head of the police at Marash, has of being especially hostile to the Christian population.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 157.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 60.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 11, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 79 of the 30th ultimo relative to the Armenians from Zeitun imprisoned at Aleppo and other places.

You will use your discretion as to taking steps on behalf of these prisoners when circumstances appear favourable for your intervention. There can be no doubt that it would produce a good effect in this country if the Bishops now imprisoned were liberated.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 158.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 12.)

(No. 53.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 12, 1895, 11 A.M.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 46 to your Lordship, Mr. Graves telegraphs the following information:—

The Armoudan prisoners were, he hears, tried secretly by court-martial; they were not allowed to call witnesses or employ counsel.

As to the crimes of wounding a guard, robbing a Kaïmakam, and resisting the troops for thirty-six hours, they were committed by Hadji Caloust and his four companions. At the time they were committed the others were already in prison.

The charge of murdering two informers seems to be a new invention.

I would refer your Lordship to Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 584 of the 15th December, 1893, containing a despatch from Mr. Graves on this subject.

No. 159.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 12.)

(No. 54.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople February* 12, 1895, 7·30 P.M.

CONSUL-GENERAL DRUMMOND HAY has informed me that the Governor of Beyrout has told him that, by order of the Porte, no foreigners would be supplied with travelling teskerehs without special authority.

The Grand Vizier promised me to-day to telegraph at once to the Governor to remove the restriction, on my representing to his Highness the inconvenience that would be caused to tourists.

No. 160.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 19.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February* 12, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of to-day relative to the manner in which the trial of the Armenian prisoners from Armoudan was conducted, and the nature of the charges brought against them.

You should warn the Grand Vizier that if the facts stated by Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum form the subject of questions in Parliament, a most unfortunate effect will be produced on public opinion in this country. Her Majesty's Government trust that the cases of these prisoners will have his Highness' personal attention, and that he will secure a searching and complete re-examination of them.

No. 161.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 63. Confidential.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 12, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 60, Confidential, of the 23rd ultimo, forwarding information received from Tokat with regard to the disturbances which took place in that town in August last.

This information agrees in the main with the former report on the subject inclosed in your Excellency's despatch No. 484 of the 19th October last, but the figures given of the numbers of both Turks and Armenian sufferers and prisoners are contradictory, and probably exaggerated.

As these reports are derived solely from Armenian sources, it would, I think, be desirable that Mr. Consul Longworth should endeavour to obtain some trustworthy information as to the origin, nature, and extent of the trouble, taking care so to conduct his inquiries as to avoid arousing any fresh irritation against the sufferers on the part of the Turkish authorities.

If your Excellency sees no objection to this course, I shall be glad if you will instruct Mr. Longworth accordingly.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 162.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 69.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 12, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 93 of the 4th instant reporting the communications from the Sultan, conveyed to your Excellency by Munir Bey and

subsequently by Said Pasha, with regard to the proceedings of the foreign Delegates at Moush, and the exclusion of foreign correspondents from Asia Minor.

I approve the language held by your Excellency in reply, as recorded in your despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 163.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 55.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 13, 1895, 9·30 A.M.*

I CONFERRED with the Russian and French Ambassadors after receiving Mr. Shipley's telegram which I repeated to the Foreign Office in my telegram No. 50.

On Sunday our respective Dragomans jointly urged the Porte to issue instructions to the Commission to visit the village in the neighbourhood of Moush indicated by the Delegates. The Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me to-day that telegraphic instructions have been sent in the sense desired.

The above is with reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 18.

No. 164.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 56. Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 13, 1895, 2·10 P.M.*

CONTRARY to custom, the Armenian Patriarch was received in audience by the Sultan when he called to congratulate His Imperial Majesty on his birthday.

The Sultan began the interview, which did not extend over three or four minutes, by making inquiries about the report on Armenian grievances, which had been asked for through Munir Bey, and went on to say, "Hot-headed persons are to be found in every country to whom good advice should be given. In the case of Armenians you must give such advice."

"This morning," replied the Patriarch, "when I publicly offered up prayers for your Majesty I also gave the necessary advice."

His Majesty continued: "It is the duty of those who are placed at the head of religious bodies to be on the side of the Rulers." The audience then terminated, the Patriarch vouchsafing no reply.

The Sultan was said, according to rumours current here, to have treated the Patriarch with marked favour, and tried to gain him over, but the above account was given me by his Secretary, and is the correct one.

No. 165.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 57.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 13, 1895.*

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs that at to-day's sitting the Delegates renewed their proposal to visit Haskeui, the village which Serkiss referred to in his evidence. The Commissioners at once assented, and proposed to start the next morning. In view, however, of the fact that some ten or twelve inhabitants of Shenik were waiting to be examined, among them being two important witnesses referred to by Ereo, the President put it to the Delegates whether they would still wish to proceed to Shenik at once, or whether it would not be more convenient first to examine the witnesses who were ready. The Delegates held it of greater importance to at once obtain the evidence of the inhabitants of Shenik, and therefore determined to reserve for the present the question of visiting Haskeui. The Commission has accordingly deferred its departure for that place.

Mr. Shipley says that the fact of four or five days having elapsed since they first suggested to proceed to Haskeui had considerably modified the original proposal, and that they were therefore more disposed to adopt the course they did.

No. 166.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 14.)

(No. 58.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 14, 1895, 8 P.M.*

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs from Moush 14th February that at the sitting of the Commission on the 13th February Sako of Shenick was examined. This witness gave his evidence in a very clear manner, and stated that the villages of Shenick, Semal, and Gheliguzian were attacked and burned by the soldiers and the Kurds; all the men, women, and children, taking with them such of their goods and cattle as they could get together, fled to the Antok mountain, where they remained for five days, when, on perceiving that the soldiers were advancing to the attack, they again took to flight, and dispersed in different directions.

This witness had heard from survivors that after he himself had fled a priest with 200 persons whom he had gathered together, men, women, and children, went with the intention of surrendering, but the soldiers at Gheliguzian, with whom was a superior officer, bayonetted all the men—the women, however, were not touched; the corpses were thrown into a trench, the position of which can be pointed out by several persons, including Tavo of Semal.

Sako himself saw a soldier bayonetting a child, and he had heard that several women in their efforts to prevent the cries of their children from attracting the attention of the Kurds and the soldiers had accidentally stifled their babies by putting their hands over their mouths.

Although there are considerable discrepancies to be explained between the accounts of Ereo and those of the above witness, yet both agree in their statements as to the very serious nature of the excesses suffered at the hands of the soldiers.

On Thursday, Tavo of Semal, mentioned above, will be examined before the Commission.

No. 167.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 71.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 14, 1895.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 86 of the 2nd instant, forwarding copies of notes which have passed between your Excellency and the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs with regard to the refusal of the Porte to allow foreign newspaper correspondents to travel in Asia Minor for the present.

I approve the terms of your Excellency's note to Said Pasha.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 168.

Extracts from Letters received from Americans resident in six different Cities in Turkey.—(Communicated by Lady Henry Somerset, February 16, 1895.)

Bitlis, April 3, 1894.

IT does seem in this region as if the Government were bent on reducing all those who survive the process to a grovelling poverty.

* * * * *

There is good reason for thinking that unless so-called Christian nations extend a helping hand, those for whom we are working will become well-nigh extinct.

* * * * *

And there is no computing the lives that are going, not in open massacre as in Bulgaria—the Government knows better than that now—but in secret, silent, secluded ways.

New York, January 25, 1895.

Up to May 1894, when I left Van, the whole Christian population of that region was simply paralyzed by fear, and there was no manifestation of any revolutionary thought or intention by the Armenians.

Certainly, if such a revolution were contemplated, you would expect to find it in the Van and Bitlis Vilayets, where the provocation is the greatest.

Bitlis, September 26, 1894.

There seems little doubt that there has been repeated in the region back of Moush what took place in 1876 in Bulgaria. The sickening details are beginning to come in. . . . . Forty-eight villages are said to have been wholly blotted out.

Bitlis, October 3, 1894.

As the time goes on the extent of the slaughter seems to be confirmed as greater than was first supposed—6,000 is a low figure, it is probably nearer 10,000.

Mr. Hallward, the new Consul at Van, has gone directly there, and it is said that the other Consuls from Erzeroum have also been sent to investigate.

The Government tried to get the people here to sign an Address to the Sovereign expressing satisfaction with his rule, disclaiming sympathy with the Armenians who have "stirred matters up," stating that the thousand slain in Talvoreeg met their just deserts, and that the four outsiders captured should be summarily punished, expressing regret that it has been thought best to send Consuls to investigate, and stating that there was no need for their coming. From this document we at least got some facts that were before suppositions. It consisted of about 2,000 words, and it was expected that it would be sent by telegraph with at least 1,000 signatures.

The Armenians here have not yet signed it, though in four districts similar papers have been secured properly sealed.

Constantinople, October 31, 1894.

This awful story is just beginning to be known here, though the massacre took place early in September. The Turks have used infinite pains to prevent news leaking out, even going to the length of sending back from Trebizond many hundreds from the Moush region who had come this way on business.

This massacre was ordered from here in the sense that some Kurds having robbed Armenian villages of flocks, the Armenians pursued and tried to recover their property, and a fight ensued in which a dozen Kurds were killed. The slain were "semi-official robbers," *i.e.*, enrolled as troops and armed as such, but not under control.

The authorities there telegraphed here that Armenians had "killed some of the Sultan's troops." The Sultan at once ordered infantry and cavalry to put down the Armenian rebellion, and they did it, only, not finding any rebellion, they cleared the country so that none should occur in the future.

Erzeroum, November 16, 1894.

A number of able-bodied young Armenians were captured, bound, covered with brushwood, and burned alive. A number of Armenians, variously estimated, but less than 100, surrendered themselves and pleaded for mercy. Many of them were shot down on the spot, and the remainder were dispatched with sword and bayonet. A lot of women, variously estimated from 60 to 160 in number, were shut up in a church, and the soldiers were "let loose" among them. Many were outraged to death, and the remainder dispatched with sword and bayonet. A lot of young women were collected as spoils of war. Two stories are told:—

1. That they were carried off to the harems of their Moslem captors.

2. That they were offered Islam and the harems of their Moslem captors—refusing, they were slaughtered.

Children were placed in a row one behind another and a bullet fired down the line, apparently to see how many could be dispatched with one bullet. Infants and small children were piled one on the other and their heads struck off. Houses were surrounded by soldiers, set on fire, and the inmates forced back into the flames at the point of the bayonet as they tried to escape.

It is to be noted that the massacres were perpetrated by regular soldiers, for the most part under command of officers of high rank. This gives the affair a most serious aspect. A Christian does not enjoy the respect accorded to street dogs.

If this massacre passes without notice it will simply become the declaration of the doom of the Christians. There will be no security for the life, property, or honour of a Christian.

Wild rumours have been abroad for a long time, but trustworthy information came to hand slowly. Everything has been done to hush it all up. Some of the minor details of the stories I have told above may not be exact, but I feel quite certain they are in the main. However, that a cruelly barbarous and extensive massacre of Christians by regular soldiers, assisted by Kurdish Hamidieh, under command of officers of rank and responsibility, occurred cannot be denied.

Van, November 10, 1894.

The Bitlis friends are justly anxious to have the truth of this dreadful matter known in the outside world, but it is utterly impossible for them to get it out. The Government seems to be looking out well for their outgoing letters, as we know a number have been sent to us which have not come through, and it is probable all their letters may be suppressed, or at least examined. Should the Government find accounts of this matter in their letters, or be able to trace such accounts to them, or us, they would doubtless contrive to wreak some form of revenge on them or their work, so it is very important that whatever is published should be in such a way that it can't be traced to us.

It does seem as if complete ruin of the Armenian race in Turkey were impending unless some outside influence is brought to bear, and with them would go our work, and all the outlay that has been made, and which ought to bring enlightenment ultimately to the Moslems as well as the Armenians.

Our English Consul has just visited Moush, and secured accurate information, which confirms all that is contained in the inclosed letters. This information has been sent to his Government, but he is not at liberty to write to the press, and I do not know to what extent this official information will get before the general public. So anything we can do to enlighten the world is desirable.

Bitlis, November 19, 1894.

And now begins a campaign of butchery that lasts some twenty-three days, or, roughly, from the middle of August to the middle of September. The Ferik Pasha, who came post haste from Erzinghian, read the Sultan's Firman for extermination, and then hanging the document on his breast, exhorted the soldiers not to be found wanting in their duty. On the last day of August, the anniversary of the Sultan's accession, the soldiers were especially urged to distinguish themselves, and they made it the day of greatest slaughter. Another marked day occurred a few days earlier, being marked by the occurrence of a wonderful meteor. No distinctions were made between persons or villages as to whether they were loyal, and had paid taxes, or not. The orders were to make a clean sweep. A priest and some leading men from one village went out to meet an officer, taking in their hands their tax receipts, declaring their loyalty, and begging for mercy; but the village was surrounded, and all human beings put to the bayonet. A large and strong man, Chief of one village, was captured by the Kurds, who tied him, threw him on the ground, and, squatting around him, stabbed him to pieces. At Galigozan many young men were tied hand and foot, laid on the ground in a row, covered with brushwood, and burned alive. Others were seized and hacked to death piecemeal. At another village a priest and several leading men were captured, and promised release if they would tell where others had fled; but, after telling, all but the priest were killed. A chain was put around the priest's neck, and pulled from opposite sides till he was several times choked and revived, after which several bayonets were planted upright, and he raised in the air and let fall upon upon them. The men of one village, when fleeing, took the women and children, some 500 in number, and placed them in a sort of grotto, in a ravine. After several days the

soldiers found them, and butchered those who had not died of hunger. Sixty young women and girls were selected from one village and placed in the church, when the soldiers were ordered to do with them as they liked, after which they were butchered. In another village fifty choice women were set aside and urged to change their faith and become "hanums" in Turkish harems, but they indignantly refused to deny Christ, preferring the fate of their fathers and husbands. People were crowded into houses, which were then set on fire. In one instance a little boy ran out from the flames, but was caught on a bayonet and thrown back. Children were frequently held up by the hair and cut in two, or had their jaws torn apart. Women with child were ripped open, older children were pulled apart by their legs.

Even if one were able to visit the district, it would be impossible to get more than an approximate estimate of the number of victims, for many were thrown into trenches that the rain had washed out, and were covered with earth. Where no such trenches existed the bodies were piled up with alternate layers of wood, saturated with kerosene, and set on fire. But it seems certain that the villages of the whole district were wiped out.

It seems safe to say that forty villages were totally destroyed, and it is probable that 10,000 at least were killed. The lowest estimate is 10,000, and many put it much higher. This is allowing for more fugitives than it seems possible can have escaped. To cap the climax, the Governor-General, through imprisonment and intimidation of various kinds, has forced the chief men in all the province (the city of Bitlis alone excepted) to seal an Address of gratitude to the Sultan that the Government has restored order in the vilayet.

Trebizond, November 10, 1894.

The General is said to have worn on his breast an order from Constantinople, which he read to the soldiers, commanding them to cut down the Armenians root and branch, and adjuring them if they loved their Sultan and their Government they would do so. A terrible massacre followed. Between 5,000 and 10,000 Christians are said to have been butchered in a most terrible manner. Some soldiers say 100 fell to each one of them to dispose of; others wept because the Kurds did more execution than they. No respect was shown to age or sex. Men, women, and infants were treated alike, except that the women were subjected to greater outrage before they were slaughtered. The women were not even granted the privilege of a life of slavery.

After the above-mentioned events the Governor attempted to persuade and compel the Armenians to sign a paper thanking the Sultan and himself that justice had been done to the rebels."

Harpoot, December 6, 1894.

The orders read before the army collected in haste from all the chief cities of Eastern Turkey was: "Whoever spares man, woman, or child is disloyal." The region was surrounded by soldiers of the army, and 20,000 Kurds also are said to have been massed there. Then they advanced upon the centre, driving in the people like a flock of sheep, and continued thus to advance for days. No quarter was given, no mercy shown. Men, women, children shot down or butchered like sheep. Probably when they were set upon in this way some tried to save their lives and resisted in self-defence. Many who could fled in all directions, but the majority were slain. The most probable estimate is 15,000 killed, thirty-five villages plundered and razed, burnt, women were outraged and then butchered.

Every effort is being made and will be made to falsify the facts and pull the wool over the eyes of European Governments. But the bloody tale will finally be known, the most horrible, it seems to me, that the nineteenth century has known. As a confirmation of the report, the other day several hundred soldiers were returning from the seat of war, and at a village near us one was heard to say that he alone with his own hand had killed thirty pregnant women. Some who seem to have some shame for their atrocious deeds say, "What could we do, we were under orders?"

Harpoot, December 17, 1894.

The soldiers who went from here talk quite freely about matters at Sassoon. A. heard one talk the other day. He said the work was mostly finished before the Harpoot soldiers got there. There was great spoil, flocks, herds, household goods, &c., but their chief work was to dispose of the heaps and heaps of the dead. The stench was awful. They were gathered into the still standing houses and burnt with the houses. They say that the work of destruction was wrought by the "Hamidieh," *i.e.*, the newly organized Kurdish regiments. Those regiments are one of the chief elements of danger to the country now.

Harpoot, December 20, 1894.

It is difficult to exaggerate the atrocities committed. They are worse than those in Bulgaria; but being done in a corner they are not likely to attract much attention.

All that we learn through soldiers who went from here and from other sources confirms the first reports. The outrages were almost beyond belief. Some of the refugees are in this region, but not many escaped.

Erzeroum, December 22, 1894.

In August the Armenians were declared in rebellion. The regular soldiers and Hamidiehs were ordered to the spot. Orders were issued from Constantinople to put down the rebellion. Both regulars and Hamidiehs were used. The massacre began after the middle of August, about the 18th, and continued to about the 10th September.

The less horrible outrages were some of the following: bayoneting the men, and in this wounded condition either burying them or burning them; outraging women, and then dispatching them with bayonets or swords; ripping up pregnant women; impaling infants and children on the bayonet, or dispatching them with the sword. Houses were fired, and the inmates driven back into the flames. The unspeakable horror of those three weeks must have sent many a one crazy.

Erzeroum, December 29, 1894.

In the meantime the Sassoon refugees are scattered over the country begging. Their stories, together with the stories of the soldiers, confirm the most horrible of the reports of cruelty. In all this remember that the same thing has been going on on a lesser scale all over the country.

Erzeroum, January 5, 1895.

The horrible stories are only being confirmed. It is said that unborn babes were cut out from the quivering mothers and carried about on spear-tops. The Turks themselves now see that they went a step too far, and they are feeling the awful tension of suspense as much as the Christians. However, the pitiless collection of taxes is causing fearful suffering.

Constantinople, January 7, 1895.

The importance of the present crisis grows upon me. In the first place Turkey is preparing for a terrible catastrophe by squeezing Armenians, and arming Muslim civilians in Sivas, Aleppo, Castamouni, and other provinces, and in the second place it is putting on the screws tighter everywhere excepting in the three eastern provinces, where the Commission is now commencing investigation. In Van and Bitlis the process of arresting and intimidating witnesses went on until the very hour of the departure of the Commission of Investigation. Then the order went out to stop, and these provinces are enjoying the first semblance of quiet that they have known for five years.

This policy of continued massacre and outrage is favoured by the profound ignorance which prevails everywhere as to the actual state of things in Turkey. People think that the Sassoon massacre is something exceptional, and that until that is proved there is no evidence of a need of European interference in behalf of Turkish Christians. What ought to be done is to fix on the mind of the public the fact that Turkey has taken up the policy of crushing the Christians all over the Empire, and has been at it for several years, so that even if the massacre had not taken place, the duty of Europe to prohibit Turkey from acting the part of Anti-Christ was still self-evident.

The accompanying extracts are verbatim copies of letters recently received as shown by the dates. The places and dates are given for private use. If in any way public use be made of the extracts it would be well, for obvious reasons, that the names of places be suppressed.

(Signed) M. H. HITCHCOCK,
Missionary to Armenians in Massachusetts.

Boston, February 1, 1895.

No. 169.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 16.)

(No. 59.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 16, 1895, 8·30 P.M.

ARMOUDAN prisoners: my telegram to your Lordship No. 53.

I had an interview to-day with the Grand Vizier, and again spoke to him on this question. His Highness assured me that the case was not tried before a court-martial, but before the ordinary Tribunals. He promised me that the case would receive his special attention, and that it would come in due course before the Court of Cassation.

No. 170.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 16.)

(No. 60.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 16, 1895, 9 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram to your Lordship No. 54, the Grand Vizier to-day assured me that tourists visiting the Lebanon and other parts of Syria would have the customary facilities.

He has sent telegraphic orders to the Governor-General of Syria not to interfere with visitors, or, as he put it, "pilgrims," to Jerusalem.

No. 171.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 16.)

(No. 61.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 16, 1895.

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs that the whole of the two last days has been taken up with the examination of Tavo of Semal. His evidence confirmed in all essential details the account given by Sako, except that on the mountain the people of his village were at some distance from the people of Shenik. He also corroborated the statements of Sako as to the massacre of the enfeebled Ohannes and other defenceless Armenians by the soldiers at Gholiguzan. He had been one of those who accompanied the priest when he set out to give himself up, and only escaped owing to his having turned back.

He had heard from women who were present at the priest's death, that it was surrounded by circumstances of revolting barbarity. The names of some of these women he gave to the Commission. He had himself visited the trench into which the soldiers threw the corpses.

His house at Semal had been burnt with the others. Of his own house eight members had been killed, four during the flight from the mountain, and four who accompanied the priest Ohannes. He could not, however, state how many persons had perished in the whole course of the attack and flight.

The narrative of Tavo, like that of Sako, contains some discrepancies, and it will be necessary to obtain corroboration of certain of his statements.

His evidence was, on the whole, well and fearlessly given.

The Commission will be able on one important point to immediately put his veracity to the test, as he said that he knew where to find the sole survivor of the Gholiguzan affair. This man, he said, had been left for dead, but had recovered, and

was now living at a village close to Moush; he was called Avas, and his age was about 15.

At the suggestion of the Delegates, Tavo's offer to produce this youth was accepted by the Commission, and a gendarme will be sent to-day with Tavo to fetch him.

No. 172.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 62.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 17, 1895.

MY telegram No. 60 of yesterday.

Consul-General at Beyrout telegraphs that the Governor-General has informed him that he has received the Grand Vizier's instructions, and assured him that no difficulties will be put in the way of intending visitors to Jerusalem and other well-known places.

No. 173.

Sir E. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 18.)

(No. 36.)
My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 8, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a copy of the note which, as reported in my telegram No. 10 of the 2nd instant, I addressed to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, at Count Kapnist's request, asking whether it would be feasible for the Russian authorities to examine any Armenians from the district of Sassoon taking refuge in Russian territory as to the events which are reported to have taken place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

Inclosure in No. 173.

Sir E. Lascelles to M. Chichkine.

M. le Conseiller Privé, *St. Petersburgh, January* 21 (*February* 2), 1895.

HER Majesty's Government having been informed that a considerable number of Armenians from the district of Sassoon have taken refuge in Russian territory, I have been instructed by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to ask whether it would be feasible for the Russian authorities to examine those people as to the events which are reported to have taken place.

It is not improbable that the witnesses who may be summoned to appear before the Turkish Commission may be afraid to give their evidence of what occurred.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 174.

Sir H. Wyndham to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 20.)
My Lord, *Bucharest, February* 15, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 6 of the 20th ultimo, in which my attention is called to a telegram addressed to your Lordship by M. Harabedian in the name of 800 Armenians, and to report that on the 10th instant I asked the Prime Minister, who is also Minister of the Interior, if he could give me any information as to these Armenians, pointing out to his Excellency that their telegram was somewhat ambiguously worded.

I met M. Catargi last night at a Court ball, when he told me that he had

telegraphed at once to the Prefect of Galatz on the subject, who had replied that the Armenians in question were residents at Galatz Braila, and Sulina, that they had not recently arrived from Moush, that the telegram addressed to your Lordship had been drawn up by a lawyer in Galatz, and had been forwarded with a view of stimulating ("pour pousser") Her Majesty's Government in their efforts on behalf of their fellow-countrymen.

M. Catargi, in speaking of this matter, mentioned, incidentally, that numbers of the Armenians came to the Danubian ports in search of work.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 175.

General Presbyterian Alliance to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 19.)

25, *Christchurch Avenue, Brondesbury, London,*
February , 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour of addressing you by direction of the Executive Commission of the General Presbyterian Alliance, a General Union of all the Presbyterian Churches throughout the world, and possessing about 20,000,000 of adherents. Of this large body the Presbyterian Churches of Great Britain form no inconsiderable part. It is in their name specially that I now write, and with reference to religious liberty in the Turkish Empire.

Our Alliance does not take any part in the political, or even humanitarian, questions at present under discussion in connection with that country. It concerns itself exclusively with the question of religious toleration, such as, we believe, has been pledged to us by Treaties existing between Great Britain and the Turkish Empire, and by the freely-given Hatti-Humayouns of successive Sultans.

In the districts of Northern Syria, in Aleppo, in Southern Asia Minor, and in the borderlands between Persia and Turkey, our churches maintain some fifty Mission agents, who form a body separate and distinct from the well-known "American missionaries," residing for the most part in Central and Western Asia Minor, and who are strongly represented at Constantinople. More than four-fifths of all the missionaries in the districts named belong to our Presbyterian churches, and thus it is a duty very solemnly resting on us to lay our views before your Lordship.

Our missionaries in the above districts constantly complain that in their respective localities the pledges just mentioned are utterly unknown or ignored, the various authorities never acting on them. Hence the Moslem, as in the past, lords it cruelly over the Christian, whilst the members of differing Christian sects oppress and persecute one another, even to the length of murder. As the result of this, our educational work, though often carried on under the sanction of a Firman, is greatly hindered; our medical agents, though possessed of both British and Turkish diplomas, find their testimony in Courts of Law flagrantly disregarded by the local Judges; our bookhawkers and colporteurs are arrested, and their books though bearing the official Censor's stamp of approval, confiscated or detained for weeks or months, while our meetings for worship are frequently broken up by mob violence, the civil authorities persistently neglecting, even though complaint is made to them, to grant either protection or redress. These make it plain that their wish is to drive Christians and Christianity and all intellectual progress out of the land as soon as possible.

We do not trouble your Lordship at present with details of particular cases, illustrating what has now been said, for the object of this letter is not to make complaint as to such cases, but to press on Her Majesty's Government the necessity of securing, that in any new arrangements which may be made for the better maintenance of law and order in the Turkish Empire, special prominence be given to the question of religious liberty. The utter failure of the Turkish Government to carry out its own promises, made so spontaneously to the Empire and to the European Powers, rendering it imperative on these, and especially on Great Britain, to require that, in the future, the rights of freedom of worship and of conscience shall be secured as fully and as explicitly as are those of property, and that the various local authorities be put under obligation to protect and to assist men, just as much when engaging in their religious duties as when engaging in their daily

toil. The religious question has been at the root of nearly every "trouble" in Turkey hitherto, and no settlement of civil disputes will be of any permanent character or value if that question be left out of consideration, or treated as of but secondary importance. In our judgment it is the foremost of all matters requiring settlement, for its satisfactory arrangement would speedily lead to peace in other directions.

Whatever measures Her Majesty's Government may see fit to take for the purposes above mentioned, our Committee would respectfully suggest that great benefit might result from the appointment of Consular Attachés, or British-born officials of even lower rank, in a number of the smaller towns of Eastern Asiatic Turkey. The simple presence of a British official of whatever rank, especially if not engaged in any mercantile pursuit, would itself be a check on Turkish dereliction of duty, and give new courage to these Mission agents, who by long-continued educational, medical, and general missionary work, have sought the social improvement of the Turkish people. Besides, there is at present little security for the life or liberty of any convert whether from the Jewish to the Christian faith, or from one sect of Christians to another. The presence in their neighbourhood of a British official would secure for all such persons that protection which the people of Great Britain must ever demand on behalf of their Christian co-religionists in every land.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. D. MATHEWS,
General Secretary.

No. 176.

Evangelical Alliance to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 19.)

My Lord, 7, *Adam Street, Strand, London, February* 16, 1895.

THE Council of the Evangelical Alliance desire me to express to your Lordship their cordial thanks for your Lordship's communications of the 29th January and 6th February.

The Council feel extremely anxious regarding the general principle of religious liberty in Turkey, and their experience, of the past few years especially, has shown very clearly that it is only with the greatest difficulty that the Turkish Government has been induced to redress some of the cases of religious persecution which have been brought before it. It is most gratifying to the Council to find that your Lordship will give this subject your careful attention, in view of the negotiations arising out of the present Commission of Investigation in Armenia.

The Council also rejoice to learn from your Lordship's letter of the 6th February that the Greek Protestants at Ordou have at last obtained permission to open their school in the pastor's house. We know, not only from your Lordship's present communication, but also from our Committee at Constantinople, how energetically Sir Philip Currie has taken up this and other matters which have been brought before his Excellency, in the first instance by our Committee at Constantinople, and also by the communications from your Lordship.

The Council of the Evangelical Alliance trust that the continued efforts of the British Government, coupled with the representations of the other Powers of Europe, may speedily lead to an amelioration of the condition of the Christians generally in Turkey.

Again thanking your Lordship, believe me, &c.

(Signed) A. J. ARNOLD,
General Secretary.

No. 177.

Sir J. Pauncefote to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 20.)

(No. 40.)

My Lord, *Washington, February* 8, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith, in original, as received by me, a series of Resolutions, stated to have been adopted by a meeting of the inhabitants of Fitchburg, to advocate the cause of the Armenians in Turkey.

Fitchburg is a town of 13,000 inhabitants, not far from Boston.

I have, &c.

(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

Inclosure in No. 177.

Resolutions.

WHEREAS the evidence is indisputable that there has been an atrocious and causeless massacre of Armenians by Turkish soldiers and Kurdish irregulars in Eastern Turkey:

Whereas this is the fourth massacre of Christians that has occurred in the Turkish Empire in about fifty years, besides one of Yesides, a heathen people, in 1892:

Whereas the condition of all the Christian subjects of the Empire for centuries has been one of severe oppressions and injustices, and in later years of frequent murders, continual robbery, unjust taxation, and utter insecurity of life or property, so that life to the Christians is intolerable:

Whereas the Signatory Powers in the LXIst Article of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 required, and the Sublime Porte undertook, that the Armenians should be protected from the Kurds and Circassians, and that administrative reforms demanded by local requirements should be carried out:

And whereas no protection has been afforded and no reforms effected in the sixteen years since the Treaty of Berlin was made, but instead the situation has grown continually worse, with no prospect and no hope of improvement from the Turkish Government itself; and also with well-grounded apprehension that the investigation of the Sassoon massacre now in progress will not be thorough and satisfactory:

Therefore resolved, that we, the inhabitants of the city of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in mass meeting assembled on this 24th day of January, 1895, do hereby earnestly request that the Government of the United States of America use its influence in the manner that may seem to it most efficient and proper to secure—

1. A thorough and trustworthy investigation of all the circumstances pertaining to the Sassoon massacre if the present investigation shall be unsatisfactory;

2. Suitable protection for life and property for the Armenians from the Kurds and Circassians; and

3. Administrative reforms, by which non-Moslem inhabitants of the Turkish Empire may be assured equal rights and privileges in the Courts, just taxation, and encouragement in agriculture and all productive industries.

Resolved, that a copy of these Resolutions, signed by the President and Secretary of this meeting, be sent to Secretary Gresham, and to the British Ambassador at Washington, requesting him to transmit same to the Foreign Office of his Government in London.

The above Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

(Signed) FREDERICK FOSDECH, *Chairman.*
ALEXANDER DIGHT, *Secretary.*

No. 178.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 65.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 21, 1895, 10 A.M.*

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs that on Monday Tavo produced the witness Ovak referred to in my telegram to your Lordship No. 61. Ovak is about 16 years of age. He stated that at Gheliguzan he saw the soldiers tear out the priest Ohannes' eyes, mock him, and then stab him to death with their bayonets, and then throw his body into a ditch, afterwards falling on those who had accompanied him. He himself ran away, but received several wounds from bayonets; however, he crawled under two dead bodies, and so managed to escape, and got away to a place where his mother found him, and nursed him. His mother, he said, had since set out for Diarbekir accompanied by her two younger sons. His body showed the marks of numerous wounds, and was yesterday, by order of the Commission, examined by three medical men, namely, two military and the municipal doctors. These three doctors reported that the wounds were at most two months old, that they are the result of burns caused by heated iron points, and could never have been caused by bayonets. We do not, however, consider that the report of such doctors disposes entirely of the question of Ovak's veracity, and we feel that in such a case it would be far more satisfactory if the services of an independent medical witness had been obtained.

We have pointed out to the Commission that it is now absolutely necessary to obtain the evidence of the women whom Tavo referred to as witnesses of the occurrences at Gheliguzan.

No. 179.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 66.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 21, 1895, 6 P.M.*

MR. GRAVES, referring to Mr. Shipley's telegram repeated to your Lordship in my preceding telegram, informs me that there is at Erzeroum another survivor of the same massacre who escaped wounded. Mr. Graves and his Russian colleague have seen him, and find that his story agrees with that of Ovak as to the death of the priest. He and a survivor of the Talori massacre, whom they have also seen, are to go to give evidence before the Commission at Moush. Mr. Graves fears that the Turkish Commissioners will take every possible advantage of the fact that it is impossible to procure independent medical evidence.

No. 180.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.—(Received at the Foreign Office, February 22.)

(No. 20. Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, January 28, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose copies of a Memorandum which I have prepared on the subject of the effect produced upon Armenian opinion in these provinces by the recent occurrences in Sassoon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 1 in No. 180.

Memorandum.

AS far as any public opinion can be said to exist among the Armenians of Eastern Turkey in Asia, it must be sought for among the more or less educated inhabitants of the towns. The vast majority of the agricultural population are in a very backward condition, educationally speaking, and seem only conscious of a lively sense of the insecurity and oppression under which they suffer, and of a readiness to accept relief in whatever form, and from whatever quarter, it may be offered. But the townspeople, hampered though they are by the want of freedom of discussion, and of a local press, cannot be entirely debarred from forming and exchanging opinions upon current events and their possible influence upon the future of their nationality. Very strongly marked lines of cleavage have for years past been noted among them on those subjects, and party spirit ran higher between the holders of conflicting views than could augur well for future harmony, if ever the political destinies of the Armenians were to be intrusted to themselves for management.

Broadly speaking, their parties, as they existed previous to the Sassoon disturbances, might be classed as follows:—

1. A Conservative and Turcophile party, composed of officials in Ottoman employ, and their families; of the hangers on, "Kehayas," stewards and unofficial agents of various degrees of the leading Mussulmans, who owed their immunity from oppression to the protection of their patrons, at whose expense they frequently enriched themselves; and of a certain number of higher ecclesiastics and wealthy laymen of the old school, whose large material interests depended upon the favour of the Turks. On the latter they were ready to lavish as much lip-service as was required of them, and they looked with disfavour upon anything calculated to alter the old order of things,

under which they had individually prospered. To these may be added the Armenian Catholics, who, from their geographical distribution, had little to suffer from Kurdish exactions, while they enjoyed almost entire freedom from Government interference on political and educational grounds. They, too, had every reason to fear any change; a Russian annexation meant the loss of their present religious immunities, and an Armenian autonomy would leave them at the mercy of the Gregorian majority.

2. A Moderate Liberal party, comprising a majority of the business, professional and scholastic, classes, together with the best of the higher clergy, whose views, although too liberal to allow them to be really contented with the present position of Christians under Turkish rule, could not be called actively disloyal. They were generally quite alive to the material impossibility of constituting an independent Armenia, as well as to the danger of ultimate denationalization that perhaps awaited them in case of annexation by Russia; it was therefore their aim to avoid precipitating any violent solution of the Armenian question, and to maintain the Armenian element as such, by strengthening and developing the national Church and schools, which enjoyed greater freedom under Ottoman than under Russian dominion; at the same time, they placed their hopes for the future in the ultimate introduction of those administrative reforms which have been so often promised by the Porte.

3. A small but active revolutionary party, but scantily represented within the Turkish Empire, as it is largely composed of young Armenians who have studied abroad, and have fallen under the influence of Socialist or Nihilist propaganda, to whom may be added a certain sprinkling of political exiles and refugees, but still comprising some of the more restless spirits among the Armenians of Turkey, who are ready to assist their comrades abroad in endeavouring to realize their projects. The most prominent organ of this party for some time past has been the journal "Hindchak," published first at Geneva and subsequently at Athens by a group of agitators, to whom almost all the Armenian disorders of the past few years can be traced, and it may be more convenient to refer to this party in general as the "Hindchak" group.

Their object has plainly been, by creating an appearance of widespread disaffection, quite out of proportion to their numbers and influence, to provoke reprisals on the part of the Turkish Government and people, of a nature to draw the attention of the Powers to the manifest grievances of the Armenian nation, and the necessity for their redressal. In this, it must be admitted that they have been ably seconded by the action of the Turkish authorities themselves in the provinces chiefly concerned. Their policy appears to be merely destructive, and so long as they can upset the present régime, they seem indifferent as to what shall replace it; at least I am not aware of their having formulated any alternative scheme of government.

Careful inquiry and observation have driven me to the conclusion that the events of the last six months, coming at the end of a period of ever-increasing misgovernment and persecution, have created a complete revolution in Armenian opinion.

The "Hindchak" group may be first disposed of. It may be taken for granted that they are satisfied with the results of their agitation; its great object, namely, to arrest the attention of Europe, has been attained, whether through their own machinations or by the fault of Turkish officials, and it will be well for all concerned if they cease from further agitation, which has become purposeless, and would only serve to justify the severities of the Government.

The Turcophile party, or at least all that part of it which is not entirely dead to national sentiment of any kind, has been deeply stirred; many of its members are already in secret sympathy and agreement with their former opponents, and many more will join them if they see that the changes which they formerly combated are inevitable and imminent, being of the class which is always disposed to come over to the winning side.

As for the Moderate Liberals, their views appear to be undergoing a complete change. They declare that it is useless any longer to pin their faith upon the development of the national Church and schools, or to wait for the voluntary introduction of reforms, not only in view of the present vexatious manner in which ecclesiastical and educational questions are dealt with, but of what they believe to be the deliberate policy of the Government for the weakening and ultimate extinction of the Armenian element in these provinces. What use, they ask, will there be for church or schools, if there is no Armenian population left to fill them? And whereas, not long ago, they were strongly opposed to the idea of Russian annexation, and would have viewed the prospect, even of a temporary occupation, with apprehension,

I am inclined to think that their general feeling now on the appearance of Russian troops would be one of genuine relief, and that the security thus afforded for their lives, their property, and the honour of their women, would be considered an ample compensation for having certain spiritual and scholastic restrictions imposed upon them.

However, though they might at this moment accept Russian rule with resignation and even joy, there can be little doubt that the solution to which they look forward as most satisfactory is the establishment of some autonomous form of Local Government, resembling that of the Lebanon, under which they could enjoy security of life and property, and immunity from oppression, together with equal rights of citizenship with their Mussulman neighbours, and a proportionate share in the management of local affairs. But they are profoundly sceptical of the introduction of such reasonable reforms without foreign interference, and of their execution without some kind of foreign control.

Erzeroum, January 28, 1895.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 181.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.—(*Received at the Foreign Office, February* 22.)

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Erzeroum, February 1, 1895.

ON 28th instant I had the honour to transmit to your Excellency a telegram from Mr. Shipley, reporting that the President of the Commission of Inquiry had read out a summary of documents furnished by the Bitlis authorities, containing an official account from the Turkish point of view of the occurrences in Sassoon, and that he had proposed to begin the inquiry by summoning and examining all the persons referred to in these documents. Mr. Shipley, with the concurrence of his colleagues, then suggested that the charges against the Imperial troops of burning villages and massacring a great part of their inhabitants should be taken first, leaving the question of responsibility to be examined later, but this suggestion was not accepted by the Commissioners.

I lost no time in communicating the sense of Mr. Shipley's telegram to my Russian and French colleagues, but as their Delegates had not reported to them on this subject, they were obliged to telegraph to Moush, asking for direct information before discussing it. The Russian and French Delegates have now replied, giving a general confirmation of Mr. Shipley's account of the President's proposal, the counter-suggestion put forward by them, and its rejection by the Commissioners. They do not, however, mention, as Mr. Shipley does, that the version of the Sassoon occurrences adopted by the Commission as the basis for its inquiries is an official account emanating from Bitlis, which we can hardly help regarding as coming from a tainted source, but they merely state that the President proposed to take the occurrences "in chronological order," without saying what the authority for such chronological order may be.

My colleagues and I feel that if the President's method of procedure is definitely adopted, the inquiry may be diverted into side issues, and much valuable time may be lost before getting to the real facts, in examining a number of witnesses referred to in the Bitlis documents, who have no doubt been duly primed in the interests of Tahsin Pasha and his associates. At the same time, it would be difficult to contest the right of the Turkish Commissioners to conduct the inquiry in the chronological order of events as they propose to do. We have therefore agreed to telegraph to-day to our respective Ambassadors, merely expressing regret that the suggestion of our Delegates was not followed by the Commissioners, as, in our opinion, the main object of the whole inquiry is to establish whether the alleged massacres took place or no; the question of responsibility necessarily remaining for later consideration.

As an indication that the Commissioners do not adhere absolutely to the principle which they have thus laid down, the French Delegate yesterday (31st January) informed his Consul here that on that day they heard the evidence of a witness indicated to them by the Delegates with respect to the whole of the occurrences in Sassoon.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 182.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.—(Received at the Foreign Office, February 22.)

(No. 22.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, February 1, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have not been able to obtain any confirmation of the alleged cases of sedition and political brigandage referred to in the extracts from the "Turk," inclosed in your Excellency's despatches of the 6th and 15th ultimo. Even if true, they appear trivial enough when compared with the daily outrages of the Kurds upon their Christian neighbours, of which no official notice is taken.

At the present moment, a remarkable absence of political agitation is noticeable among the Armenians, partly attributable to the terror inspired by the Sassoon massacres, and partly to their evident desire not to compromise the good results they hope for from the inquiry now proceeding, by conduct of a nature to justify Government severities. This being so, I am inclined to believe that communications of this sort from the Mushir Zeki Pasha, the ex-Vali of Bitlis, and the Vali of Van are being given prominence to in the Turkish press, in the hope of distracting attention from the Sassoon affair, and perhaps of furnishing some kind of *ex post facto* justification for the past conduct of the above-named officials.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. R. GRAVES.

No. 183.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 103.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 11, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora, reporting an attack on Christian houses by a Turkish crowd at Yozgat.

I am bringing this incident to the notice of the Sublime Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 183.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Angora, February 4, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that on Friday, the 18th ultimo, a Turkish rabble, on its return to Yozgat after having accompanied a band of departing pilgrims for a short distance out of the town, threw stones at the windows of houses belonging to Armenians and Greeks. Several hundred panes were smashed and the greatest anxiety was caused amongst the Christian inhabitants who, fearing a repetition of the scenes of a year ago, abandoned their offices and shops for two or three days.

Sufficient details have not been received here to enable me to state whether there was any provocation on the part of the Christians.

The unremitting personal as well as race hatred existing between the Christian and Mussulman elements at Yozgat may easily account for an outbreak of fanatical enthusiasm on the part of a crowd still under the influence of the religious ceremonies attendant on the solemn departure of pilgrims for Mecca.

Several arrests have been made among the Turks with a view to discover the ringleaders, but it remains to be seen whether any one will be punished.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 183.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

Angora, February 7, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 4th instant reporting the stoning, by a Turkish mob, of the houses of Armenians and Greeks at Yozgat, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that, according to the version given by a credible and independent witness, there was no provocation from the Christian side, on the contrary, the attack had every appearance of having been premeditated. The crowd was chiefly, if not entirely, composed of from 200 to 300 Mollahs (theological students) connected with the four "Médressehs" of the place, and they were led on by two men called Hadji Mehmed Agha Ibiloglou and Djinli Hadji Hassan, both well-known turbulent characters. They all re-entered the town armed with stones and pieces of firewood which they hurled at the windows of the Christian houses on their way back to their respective "Médressehs."

Two or three children were injured, more or less severely, by the glass and stones, and one man received a severe wound in the abdomen as he was lying asleep near a window.

The conduct of the authorities, both civil and military, appears to have been one of inaction dictated, no doubt, by fear of their unruly coreligionists as much as by indifference, and this incident helps to confirm the opinion I ventured to submit in my despatch of the 25th September last, and which I have once more expressed to the Vali, as to the necessity of removing the Turkish ringleaders named therein.

With the exception of a few arrests of Turks I am not aware whether, since the Vali became acquainted rather tardily with the occurrence, any further steps have been taken to punish the rioters and to prevent a repetition of such unprovoked assaults which, if repeated, might lead to reprisals on the part of the Armenians who are in a state bordering on exasperation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH

No. 184.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 104.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 11, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond respecting the closing of the interior of Asia Minor to foreign travellers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 184.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February 2, 1895.*

YOUR Excellency is doubtless aware of the fact that the provincial authorities have been ordered to prevent such foreigners as are not provided with special permits from visiting the interior of Asia Minor.

The injunction is as ill-advised as it is arbitrary. It not only causes considerable annoyance, but gives the impression that the inland districts must be actually in a state of shameful misgovernment.

It may interest your Excellency to know what has occurred at Trebizond in consequence of this order.

On the 27th ultimo the "Daily News" correspondent, Mr. Frank Scudamore, arrived from Constantinople, and called on me to assist him in reaching Erzeroum. He produced the ordinary "teskereh," or Turkish pass, good for Van viâ Trebizond. As it was in perfect order, I told him he may start on his journey and that I would see he is not hindered within this vilayet, adding that should he be stopped at Baïburt to wire to Mr. Graves for help. He left, as arranged, early next morning, aided by one of my

cavasses in passing the last police station of the town. His departure was duly reported, and caused greater vexation than I expected. It was with difficulty, in fact, I succeeded in inducing the Vali to release the responsible police officer, as well as to allow the journalist to reach his first destination, that of Erzeroum.

I had hardly returned from my visit to Cadri Bey than Mr. Hodgetts, of the "Graphic," accompanied by Major George Barlow, of the Royal Artillery, came to see me for the same purpose, and with similar Turkish passes. It was impossible in their case to do otherwise than request the Vali to obtain for them the necessary permission. The answer of the Central Government was, however, in the negative, and I therefore asked these gentlemen what they would like to claim as damages. They demanded such a very moderate sum that I thought fit to double it, making it, as will be seen from the inclosure, 30*l.* for each, or 60*l.* for both, an amount which has this day been paid to them with the sanction of the Porte, to the great satisfaction of all concerned.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 184.

Consul Longworth to Cadri Bey.

M. le Gouverneur-Général, *Trébizonde, le* 19 (31) *Janvier*, 1895.

EN réponse à votre communication verbale d'aujourd'hui, je m'empresse d'informer votre Excellence que je viens de la porter à la connaissance des intéressés, sujets Anglais: Mr. Hodgetts et le Major Barlow.

Vu que les "teskérés" délivrés à eux à Constantinople le 11 (23) courant sont en règle, bon pour Erzeroum viâ Trébizonde, et que malgré ceci leur voyage à l'intérieur est interdit, ces messieurs, ainsi que moi, nous protestons énergiquement contre cet acte arbitraire du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman.

Par conséquent chacun de ces messieurs demande 30*l.* à titre de dommage et indemnité, somme qui, grâce à mon intervention, est plus que raisonnable.

Votre Excellence est priée donc de vouloir bien faire payer la somme requise de 60*l.*, sans aucun délai, afin d'éviter des conséquences plus fâcheuses.

Veuillez: &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 185.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 105.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 11, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch to your Lordship No. 24 of the 10th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond respecting the ill-treatment of Armenians at Kara-Hissar.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 185.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February 5*, 1895.

WITH regard to the ill-treatment of Armenians by the Kara-Hissar authorities, referred to lastly in my despatch of the 29th December, the following extract from Dr. Jewett's letter, dated Sivas, the 30th ultimo, is interesting:—

"On the 23rd instant, the Alaï Bey, Tabour Aghassi, Assistant Procureur-Général, Government physician, and about twenty zaptiehs, hurried off to Kara-Hissar.

"I have not yet heard the facts in regard to the affair. The Turks are very silent about it. I think it is a fact that about three months ago a telegram or Petition signed by several hundred Armenians of Kara-Hissar was sent to the Vali. The petitioners said

they were loyal to the Government, but that they could not stand the unjust oppression of the Mutessarif and the Tabour-Aghassi. The latter is an ally of Halil Pasha. The Vali paid no attention to the Petition. It is said that a similar Petition reached the Sublime Porte, and resulted in a severe reprimand to the Vali, and instructions to him to make an honest investigation and a careful report of the facts, and some say that the officers above mentioned (who are all very cruel and unjust in the treatment of Armenians and are allies of the Vali) were sent as a Commission of Investigation. Others say that about thirty men dressed as Circassians attacked some of the Government officials and killed one of them.

"Both Turks and Armenians are said to be greatly opposed to the Kara-Hissar Mutessarif and his clique."

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 186.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 106.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 11, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, reporting recent incident in the Sivas Vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 186.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February 5*, 1895.

DR. JEWETT, in his letter of the 30th ultimo, reports the following two recent affairs told him by the Vali of Sivas:-

1. At Tokat three Armenian brothers were visited by five armed revolutionists, who demanded of them £ T. 100 or a draft for the amount. Two of them refused to be thus blackmailed, and were badly wounded, while the third gave the draft but immediately informed the authorities. A search was made, and the gendarmes caught the five men in a house. They were armed, their clothes were bloodstained, and the draft was found in their possession.

2. At Devrik a gendarme's son was doing night watch for his father. Early in the evening he heard shrieks and ran to the spot. He was there assaulted by two Armenians and seriously wounded. The assailants in trying to escape were arrested.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 187.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 113.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 12, 1895.

ON the receipt of Mr. Graves' telegram of the 7th, relative to the intimation given by the authorities at Erzeroum to Messrs. Dillon and Seudamore that they would not be allowed to go beyond that place, I instructed Mr. Mariniteh to represent to the Grand Vizier the serious consequences that might ensue from an interference with the liberty of unoffending British travellers.

I inclose a copy of a report which has been furnished to me by Mr. Mariniteh of the interview which he had with his Highness.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 187.

Memorandum by Mr. Mariniteh.

IN accordance with your Excellency's instructions, I called yesterday upon the Grand Vizier and read to him Mr. Graves' telegram concerning the correspondents, and I stated to his Highness that your Excellency does not wish me to make representations, but merely to point out that the interference with the liberty of inoffending travellers would be a very serious matter, which was likely to cause further trouble to the Turkish Government. His Highness stated, in reply, that the Sublime Porte, as your Excellency is aware, decided to prevent any correspondents from going to the provinces inhabited by Armenians until the Commission intrusted with the mission of instituting inquiries into the events of Sassoon has actually brought its task to an end; then all the correspondents will be free to go where they like. In dictating such a prohibition, the Turkish Government was actuated by the following reason, viz., that there are foreign Delegates with the said Commission, that while travelling in those provinces one of the correrpondents might meet with some accident which would give rise to a question, and ultimately that the presence of the correspondents on the spot might "influence" the proceedings of the Commission and hamper it in the performance of its duty, with the greatest impartiality and freedom.

I pointed out to the Grand Vizier that these considerations could not justify such a prohibition, which, as a matter of course, is producing a very bad effect on the Government and public opinion in England. I asked his Highness to tell me whether any other traveller, not being a correspondent, was allowed to travel in these quarters? To this his Highness replied that it would not be probable that travellers other than those who have to send reports to their newspapers, would be desirous to go in the winter season to Sassoon, where the cold is so severe, and where they have to encounter so many difficulties. He is, therefore, inclined to believe that all foreigners who apply for permission to travel in that direction are correspondents. His Highness informed me that two gentlemen, one of whom is an officer of the British army, have been stopped at Trebizond, and having stated to the authorities that they had no money to travel, his Highness instructed the Vali to pay them £ T. 50 each, which was accordingly done.

Enclosure 2 in No. 187.

No. 188.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 116.)

Constantinople, February 13, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copies of two letters, of which I have received copies from the Armenian Patriarch, in regard to the [illegible] Armenians in the Vilayets of Sivas and Trebizond.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 188.

The Ecclesiastical Authority of Sivas to the Governor.

(Traduction.)

Le 22 Septembre, 1894.

LES rapports verbaux et écrits qui me parviennent des habitants des districts Arnik-Abad et Kaz-Abad, contiennent les détails les plus graves sur les agissements des corps de gendarmes à cheval et des cavaliers de l'armée Impériale, qui, par l'ordre du Gouvernement, parcourent depuis quelques temps les heureux dépendants de ces districts, dans le but de chercher des réfugiés en fuite.

Ces gendarmes et soldats battent de la manière la plus cruelle les personnes qu'ils rencontrent sur leur chemin, accaparent et tuent les moutons des paysans pour en faire leur nourriture, font préparer de force les mets qu'ils désirent et par leur mille autres exigences rendent la vie absolument impossible aux pauvres paysans.

En me faisant connaître cet état de choses, les habitants des districts susmentionnés déclarent que la continuation de ces méfaits les obligera à émigrer et à chercher asile dans des milieux plus paisibles.

Le droit du Gouvernement Impérial de profiter de tous les moyens possibles pour mettre la main sur les criminels est indéniable.

Mais il n'est pas permis aux autorités, qui reçoivent le mandat de faire des recherches dans ce but, de molester d'une manière aussi arbitraire les fidèles sujets de Sa Majesté Impériale.

Étant persuadé que votre Excellence blâmera de la manière la plus énergique cette conduite des corps de recherches, je prends la liberté de signaler quelques délits.

Le collecteur d'impôts Sâbri, qui s'était dernièrement rendu au village Tchiflik, après avoir encaissé les impôts dus au Gouvernement, a arrêté au sujet vu et avec le consentement tacite du Major Békir Bey, ceux des habitants qui possèdent quelques moyens d'existence, et a exigé et obtenu plusieurs sommes d'argent. Le dit collecteur a déclaré à ceux qui montraient des velléités de refus qu'il les ferait lier et conduirait à Tokat sous de graves accusations. C'est ainsi qu'en demandant au nommé Mikaël Moukhlissoglou de lui abandonner une magnifique bosse à cheval que celui-ci avait portée d'Erzeroum, il l'a menacé de faire des rapports mensongers à son égard. D'autre part il appert des témoignages des femmes Tskouhi et Anna, habitant le dit village, que le même Sâbri a aussi osé demander £T. 10 ou son consentement à subir les derniers outrages à une jeune femme, comme prix de l'élargissement de son mari, prisonnier. D'autres officiers et soldats se sont également permis de molester les femmes du village et quelques-uns sont même entrés dans la chambre d'une jeune femme, brue de l'une des témoins, la nommée Anna, dans un but de viol.

Pendant les recherches qui ont eu lieu dans le village d'Azaz, les soldats ont jeté brutalement les meubles des habitants dans les rues; ils ont habité de force dans les maisons des paysans, et les ont obligé de passer les nuits dans les rues. Non-contents des vivres et fourrages qu'ils ont obtenus pendant leur séjour dans le pays, ils en ont demandé et obtenu aussi à leur départ, pour transporter sur leur montures.

Dans ce village, il y a eu également des actes d'immoralité et plusieurs vols de céréales ont été commis. Dans la journée du 28 Août, les gendarmes ont violemment battu le prêtre Agop et ils l'ont emprisonné jusqu'au soir. Dans la nuit du 20 courant, au village de Biskendjik, le nommé Chérif à jeté, par suite d'inimitié personnelle, quelques cartouches sur un tas de tabac en feuille, qui se trouvait devant la maison du nommé Avak Casparian. Il est allé ensuite dénoncer la chose au Gouvernement. Le Caporal Hussein Tchaouch est venu constater le fait et ayant fait lever les habitants de leurs lits, il a battu de la manière la plus cruelle les nommés Djoulfa Oglou, Megueriditch, Eghia Oglou Agop, Tomboul-Oglou, Krikor. Agop a été mis devant un feu brûlant dans un état bien près d'être carbonisé; Krikor est tombé malade par suite de ses blessures. Le Mulazim Khalil Effendi et les soldats se trouvant sous sa conduite, arrivés plus tard, ont battu avec cruauté les nommés Philippe Djoulfa-Oglou, Moukhtar du village, Garabeth Baoub-Oglou, Garabeth Baghdik-Oglou, et Serkis Cazak-Oglou. Ils ont obtenu cinq medjidiés d'argent par différentes menaces du notomé Avedis Eghia-Oglou; Hoh Aghassi-Oglou, Ibrahime et les nommés Osman, Kel-Hussein et Chérif qui venaient du village Techli-Tchiflik ont participé aux cruautés des soldats et se sont emparés de plusieurs moutons appartenant aux troupeaux du village.

Le nommé Teuten Oglou-Eghia, étameur, habitant le hameau Déré du village Rüz-Abad, a déclaré que Tcherkess Ahmed, Gumueh-Oglou, du village Gul-Pounar, l'ont obligé, ainsi que son fils Roupen, de quitter unitamment leur habitation et après leur avoir mis des fers aux pieds et les avoir emprisonnés dans une chambre, les ont obligés de rester pendus pendant quelques temps; plus tard en faisant coucher Roupen par terre, ils lui ont proposé sous la menace de mort de dénoncer les criminels Arméniens, ou d'accepter la religion Musulmane.

Ces faits se passent journellement dans les villages susmentionnés; quant à la situation dans la ville même, j'ai appris avec regret qu'on avait enlevé de l'argent et des objets de valeur pendant les recherches effectuées, qu'on avait osé de prendre des libertés contraires à la moralité publique avec les vieilles et les jeunes filles et que contrairement aux ordres donnés précédemment et d'une manière formelle par votre Excellence par crieur publique, les Bachi-bouzouks continuaient à participer aux recherches de la police.

J'ai appris en outre que des paroles outrageantes pour les Arméniens et des menaces de toute sorte sont proférées journellement dans les rues.

J'ai donc l'honneur de prier votre Excellence de vouloir bien donner des ordres pour faire cesser cet état de choses.

Je la prie, en même temps, de faire punir les fauteurs des incidents du 20 Août, pour lesquels, sur la demande de l'autorité ecclésiastique, une enquête a été faite par l'Administration de la Police et par le Médecin de la Municipalité. Votre Excellence, en ordonnant cette enquête, avait promis de sévir contre les fauteurs de ces troubles.

En terminant, je prie votre Excellence d'ordonner une enquête sur les faits rapportés dans ce "takrir," relativement à la situation dans les villages, et de vouloir bien donner des ordres pour procurer un état de choses conforme aux lois et à la légalité.

J'ai, &c.

Inclosure 2 in No. 188.

Memorandum on the Situation of the Armenians in the Vilayet of Trebizond.

A TRÉBIZONDE, Samsoon, Tcharchamba, et Ounia plus de cinquante villageois Arméniens se trouvent en prison par suite des rapports présentés aux autorités, les accusant de recevoir les journaux Arméniens prohibés publiés dans différents pays de l'Europe et de correspondre avec eux.

Ces pauvres villageois sont considérés comme des révolutionnaires. Les accusations dont ils sont victimes se basent sur des aveux obtenus par des menaces et des mauvais traitements et sur des rapports dus aux instigations des Caïmacans de Tcharchamba et d'Ounia.

Aucun de ces prisonniers n'est coupable d'un fait quelconque d'homicide, de désordre, ou d'insubordination aux représentants de l'autorité. Quelques-uns ont déclaré pendant leurs interrogations qu'ils n'étaient pas des révolutionnaires mais qu'ils protestaient contre les abus et les injustices.

L'enquête qui a eu lieu à la suite de ces arrestations a prouvé que les accusés ont subis des tortures dans les prisons. Quelques-uns ont déclaré qu'ils avaient déposé pour se sauver des mauvais traitements et que leurs aveux étaient par conséquent dépourvu d'importance et de véracité.

L'injustice des arrestations est connue du Vali lui-même qui a avoué être convaincu de la parfaite innocence de la plus grande partie des personnes arrêtées.

L'enquête relative à ces prisonniers et leur interrogatoire n'ont commencé que trois mois après leur arrestation et leur procès a été retardé plus de cinq mois. Pendant ce temps, sur des ordres donnés par la Sublime Porte, les autorités locales exigeaient des familles des prisonniers le paiement de l'impôt militaire de ceux-ci et dans le cas de l'impossibilité d'obtenir la somme de la famille même pour cause de pauvreté, on obligeait les habitants de leurs quartiers de payer pour eux.

Le Caïmacan de Tcharchamba a fait arrêter en Août 1894 le prêtre Der-Tatoul Garmiman, desservant l'église Arménienne du village Martil, sous la prévention d'appartenir au Comité Révolutionnaire Arménien et de garder dans sa maison des armes et des munitions. Cette arrestation avait lieu sur un rapport et sans enquête préalable.

Les nommés Cadi-Oglou Mehmed, greffier à la police de Tcharchamba, Mehmed, caporal, et Ali, agent de police et quelques gendarmes envoyés pour faire des perquisitions, ont demandé par des menaces £T. 30 pour, disaient-ils, étouffer l'affaire.

Der-Tatoul, sous les menaces et les pressions de ces représentants de l'autorité, a payé 53 medjidiés d'argent, et quelques villageois ont donné un bon de £T. 12 payable à douze jours de date.

Cadi-Oglou Mehmed et ses compagnons ont quitté le village après avoir ainsi donné libre cours à leur cupidité.

Der-Tatoul ne voulant pas être considéré comme un coupable s'est rendu à Tcharchamba et a raconté les faits au Caïmacan, mais celui-ci n'a attaché aucune importance aux faits rapportés et a renvoyé le prêtre; alors celui ci s'est rendu à Samsoon où il a rapporté la conduite de la brigade de perquisition au Moutessarif et télégraphié les faits au Gouverneur-Général.

Sur ces dommages du prêtre le Caïmacan, afin de se sauver des graves responsabilités qu'il avait encourues, par suite de sa cupidité, a voulu créer un nouvel incident. Il a fait venir du village Oulsa-Poussar un paysan possédant un fusil Martini qui a déclaré au Sieur Mehmed, greffier de la police, avoir obtenu le fusil de Der-Tatoul.

Ce paysan a avoué plus tard, en présence du Moutessarif de Samsoon que sa déposition était fausse et qu'il avait parlé de la sorte par suite des menaces du Caïmacan.

Il a dit en même temps qu'il n'avait pas acheté le fusil de Der-Tatoul mais d'un Laz et qu'un autre paysan, son ami, avait assisté à l'achat.

Cette déclaration n'a pas sauvé Der-Tatoul de la prison. Le Caïmacan a réussi de faire interner le pauvre prêtre qui y est resté plus d'un mois jusqu'au 17 Novembre, 1894.

Le prêtre Der-Mikael, du village Chalgamlik, district d'Ounia, et son cousin, Kirkars Mouktar du dit village, se trouvent emprisonnés depuis plusieurs mois à Samsoon dans des circonstances identiques quoique aucun des faits imputés ne soit prouvés.

No. 189.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 22.)

(No. 118. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 13, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 54 of the 22nd ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a Report which has been confidentially communicated to me by the Armenian Patriarch respecting the case of the Armoudan prisoners.

I also inclose a *pro-memorid* from the Sublime Porte giving the Turkish version of the affair.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 189.

Account of Trial of the Erzindjan Prisoners.

LA Cour d'Appel d'Erzeroum, jugeant l'affaire du meurtre du nommé Khozik-Oglou Eumer, a rendu son jugement dans sa séance du 3 Décembre, 1894 (v. s.).

Cette affaire, qui par suite des manœuvres des fonctionnaires judiciaires de la localité, avait pris le caractère et l'extension d'un grand procès politique, a abouti à la condamnation à la peine de mort de vingt-quatre accusés Arméniens. En même temps cinq accusés ont été condamnés aux travaux forcés à perpétuité, cinq accusés à six ans de prison, le prêtre Der-Garabeth à cinq ans de la même peine, et vingt et un accusés, parmi lesquels le Prélat Vartan, Métropolitain de Kémakh, à trois ans de prison.

Voici, en résumé, l'origine de ce procès:

Dans les premiers jours du mois de Septembre 1891 le nommé Khozik-Oglou Eumer a été traîtreusement tué dans sa maison sise au village de Medz-Armedan (Grand Armedan), district de Kouroo-Tchay, Sandjak d'Erzindjan. Le Gouvernement local n'a pas pu trouver les véritables auteurs de ce crime; mais le prêtre Der-Garabeth du dit village et onze autres personnes ont été arrêtés, sous l'inculpation d'avoir participé au crime et d'en avoir eu préalablement connaissance.

Le nommé Youssouf Yéni-Tcheri Oglou contre lequel les habitants de Medz-Armedan s'étaient plaint au Gouvernement il y a une vingtaine d'années, par suite du meurtre commis par lui sur deux adolescents Arméniens, a voulu profiter de ce meurtre, pour satisfaire sa vengeance personnelle. C'est sur son instigation que quelques personnes, ses créatures, ont déposé contre les accusés. Rien n'a justifié l'arrestation des Arméniens de Kouroo-Tchay; pourtant quatre mois après, les accusés ont été transférés à Erzindjan, où ils ont été emprisonnés. Plus tard, les Tribunaux d'Erzindjan s'étant déclarés incompétents, l'affaire a été envoyée à Erzeroum, chef-lieu de vilayet. Les recherches faites en vue de trouver les véritables auteurs du crime étaient toujours restées sans résultat.

Reouzi Bey, adjoint du Procureur Impérial d'Erzindjan, s'étant rendu à Kouroo-Tchay pour quelques affaires administratives, a présenté le mobile et les origines de cette affaire sous les couleurs d'un crime politique, dans un but évident de profit illicite et dans l'espoir d'avancement rapide. De nouvelles arrestations ont eu lieu. Le nombre des prisonniers s'est très rapidement élevé à soixante. Deux des accusés, violemment battus, ont succombés, sous les coups, et six autres sont morts de faim et des tortures qu'on leur faisait subir dans la prison. Quelques-uns sont devenus

aveugles ; et les familles de ces pauvres gens, composées de plus de 100 personnes, sont tombées dans la misère la plus noire.

Le prêtre Der-Boghoss, desservant l'église du Petit-Armedan, et quelques villageois ont été plusieurs fois arrêtés et emprisonnés pour des causes absolument futiles et ont subis toute sorte de mauvais traitements. Le prêtre Arménien du village Hassan-Ova, Der-Nigoghoss, a été également mis en prison et n'a obtenu la liberté que grâce à une somme relativement forte, payée pour contenter la cupidité de quelques fonctionnaires.

Pendant tout ce temps le Gouvernement local a défendu aux Arméniens d'envoyer des suppliques aux autorités compétentes pour demander justice.

En Janvier 1893 le Prélat Vartan, de Kémakh, un vénérable vieillard, est allé rejoindre dans la prison les autres accusés, sous la prévention d'avoir hébergé dans le couvent, dont il est le Supérieur, un fugitif nommé Kaloust. Les autorités d'Erzindjan ont cerné le couvent avec cinquante gendarmes, mais n'ont trouvé aucune trace de séjour d'un fugitif.

Il a été prouvé que cette perquisition avait été la conséquence d'une dénonciation calomnieuse. Les dénonciateurs étaient Tahir Bey, Kefzi Bey, et Moustafa Bey, Notables de Kémakh, dont les méfaits avaient été précédemment rapportés par télégramme de la part du dit Prélat au Palais Impérial. Les témoins qui n'étaient autres que les serviteurs des dits Beys, ont plus tard avoué au Magistrat instructeur qu'ils avaient témoigné sous sa pression et par crainte.

Les Kurdes de Dersime n'ont pas tardé de profiter de l'état d'abandon du couvent, qu'ils ont attaqué et pillé. Ces Kurdes en partant ont amené dans les montagnes un jeune homme, parent du dit Prélat, qu'ils n'ont laissé en liberté qu'après avoir acquis la conviction qu'aucun trésor n'avait été caché à leurs recherches.

Les circonstances du crime, les procédés qu'on a employé, et la procédure suivie montrent que toute cette affaire n'a pas été jugée pour le fait même du meurtre mais pour d'imaginaires complots politiques. Les condamnations rendus sont basées sur ce point de vue.

Le 28 Janvier, 1895.

Inclosure 2 in No. 189.

Pro-memoria.

EN réponse au *pro-memoria* que l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique a présenté dernièrement, la Sublime Porte lui transmet les renseignements que le Gouverneur d'Erzinghian vient de lui communiquer au sujet de la sentence rendue contre cinquante-trois individus du village d'Armadan.

Ces derniers, après avoir assassiné Emmer Pehlivan, employé du Gouvernement, ils ont enduit son corps de pétrole et l'ont brûlé. Ils ont ensuite assassiné les nommés Sadullah Agha et Serkiss pour avoir donné avis à l'autorité, et ils ont également blessé le gardien Husni. Après qu'ils ont commis ces méfaits ils se sont retirés dans les montagnes sous des costumes "Lazes" et se sont mis en révolte.

Le Caïmacam de Refahize, qui était en tournée, a été rencontré par ces rebelles ; ils lui ont volé ses effets et pendant trente-six heures ils ont fait feu contre les soldats et les gendarmes, qui ont été envoyés à leur poursuite.

Le dit Tribunal a condamné sur les cinquante-trois Armoudaulis, les vingt et un à la peine capitale, les six aux travaux forcés à perpétuité et les vingt-six autres à la réclusion et aux travaux forcés à différents termes.

No. 190.

Sir H. Wyndham to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 21.)
My Lord,
Bucharest, February 18, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report that, before begging the Minister of the Interior to be so good as to supply me, if possible, with some information as to the telegram addressed to your Lordship on the 13th ultimo in the name of 800 Armenians in Roumania, I had requested Her Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Galatz to make inquiries on the same subject.

I have now the honour to inclose copy of Mr. Crawford's reply, which contains some additional details to those given to me by Mr. Catargi which I transmitted to your Lordship in my despatch No. 20 of the 15th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure in No. 190.

Acting Consul-General Crawford to Sir H. Wyndham.

Galatz, February 15, 1895.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that, on receipt of your despatch of the 7th instant, I at once communicated with the Prefect of Covurlui on the subject of the telegram from 800 Armenians in Galatz to the Foreign Office.

I have been unable to obtain an earlier report on the matter owing to the absence of the Chief of Police.

I am now informed that the telegram was drawn up and dispatched by a Roumanian Avocat, called Bonachi, at the request of an Armenian dock labourer, Garabedian, and two or three other labourers.

The Prefect interrogated these men, and they stated that the telegram did not represent what they wished to convey, which was simply an expression of gratitude in the name of the 800 Armenians at present in Roumania for the interest that was being taken in their fellow-countrymen.

I have reason to believe that a similar telegram was sent to each of the Great Powers.

There are, as far as I can discover, no refugees from the disturbed districts of Armenia in Galatz. Every year a certain number of Armenians arrive, here and in the other Danube ports, to work as porters, returning to their homes when navigation ceases.

The Prefect further informed me that these men had been stirred up to agitate by a certain Papazian, son of an Armenian priest, and a man of the worst character, who has now been expelled from the country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEO. W. CRAWFORD.

No. 190*.

Sir M. Durand to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 10.)
(Telegraphic.) P.
Tehran, February 22, 1895.

WITH reference to the Armenian refugees, I have received the following information from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez. He reports that he is sending a copy of Mr. Paton's Report, who has seen an eye-witness of some of the atrocious deeds perpetrated, but thinks that better information is procurable at Khoi and in its neighbourhood.

At Mr. Wood's request, I have authorized Mr. Paton to proceed to Khoi and its neighbourhood.

No. 191.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 20.)
(Telegraphic.) P.
Foreign Office, February 22, 1895.

I HAVE received your telegrams of yesterday, Nos. 65 and 66, relative to the medical examination of witnesses before the Sassoon Commission.

The presence at Mousb of an independent medical man seems very desirable.

Could you arrange for sending one?

No. 192.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir J. Pauncefote.

(No. 31.)
Sir,
Foreign Office, February 22, 1895.

THE information in your Excellency's despatch No. 27 of the 24th ultimo, as to the reported embarkation at New York for England of several hundred Armenians on their way to Russia, was forwarded to the Board of Trade.

That Department has placed at my disposal the passenger lists of the vessels which have arrived at the ports of the United Kingdom from the United States in January and the current month.

A perusal of these lists shows only eleven Armenian names among the passengers hitherto landed in this country, but a careful scrutiny will be exercised over the lists of future arrivals.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 193.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 25.)

(No. 68.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 25, 1895, 11·30 A.M.*

MR. GRAVES has forwarded on to me the following telegram from Mr. Shipley, dated yesterday:—

"Mr. Cole, who has just arrived here (Moush) from Bitlis, informs me that the situation in the latter place is still very critical. Esmer Bey spares no effort to persuade the eleven Armenian Notables, who are soon to be tried, to telegraph an address of thanks to the Sultan.

"According to Mr. Cole, this address denies the truth of the reported outrages at Sassoon, and protests against the foreign inquiry, and again accuses Mr. Hallward of being at the bottom of the whole agitation.

"Before we can hope to see any permanent improvement, the Americans consider that it will be necessary to remove the Muavin, the Secretary-General, and one or two others of the creatures of Tahsin Pasha. These continued intrigues against Mr. Hallward seem to be getting serious. I have asked Mr. Cole, if possible, to procure some proof of his statements, as, failing this, I do not see that we can do anything.

"The Americans beg that their Legation may be informed of their situation, which they still consider precarious, so that their Consul may be instructed to proceed to Bitlis. I informed Mr. Cole that as they had no sure and speedy means of communicating with the United States' Minister, I would make their request known to you, and that you would, should you think fit, transmit it further to Constantinople."

No. 194.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 120.)
My Lord, *Pera, February 16, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 103 of the 11th instant, I have not failed to bring to the notice of Said Pasha Mr. Consul Cumberbatch's reports of the attack on Greek and Armenian houses at Yozgat by a Turkish mob.

His Excellency said, in reply, that he had no information respecting the matter, but proposed to communicate with the Grand Vizier and call upon Memduh Pasha, the Governor of Angora, for a report on the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 195.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 78.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 26, 1895.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 103 of the 11th instant, relative to a fanatical attack made by Moslems on the houses of Christians at Yozgat.

I approve your Excellency's action in bringing the matter to the notice of the Porte.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 196.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 121.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 18, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond in regard to Armenian prisoners at Samsoon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 196.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February 8, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. de Cortanze at Samsoon reporting the escape of prisoners, the death by poison of a gaoler, and the ill-treatment of those arrested in consequence.

His account differs greatly from that given officially by the Mutessarif of Samsoon. The Vali's information up to date is that two Moslem and four Armenian prisoners, having obtained from their gaoler a long rope and twelve, not poisonous pills, but explosive balls, made a hole in the roof and escaped. They were pursued. One of the Armenians, in armed resistance, was killed, and another captured at Charshamba. The rest have not been reported as caught in the telegrams received.

Cadri Bey is about to dispatch a gun-boat to Samsoon to bring all the political prisoners to Trebizond. He has promised me to make the strictest inquiry as to whether this fresh lot of Armenian suspects had also been subjected to unwarrantable cruelty.

His Excellency, however, does not believe the allegation, as those in charge of the Samsoon gaol, namely, a gendarme lieutenant, a police officer, and three prison guards, had lately received for their past misdeeds of this nature the punishment of three days' bastinado, that is, each of them fifty strokes on their buttocks and one hundred strokes on the soles of their feet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 196.

Mr. Cortanze to Consul Longworth.

M. le Consul, *Samsoun, le 7 Février, 1895.*

J'AI l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance le fait suivant.

Le 23 Décembre dernier vers minuit, quatre hommes s'évadaient de notre prison; le 24 un gardien de cette même prison mourut d'une maladie non définie.

Ces deux faits paraissaient secondaires et ne méritaient aucune attention spéciale.

Les quatre prisonniers évadés ont été repris successivement le 25, 27, et 28 du même mois. A leur interrogation il a été découvert ce qui suit:—

1. Que le gardien décédé avait été empoisonné afin de faciliter l'évasion.

2. Que l'évasion projetée était faite en faveur de plusieurs Arméniens emprisonnés pour cause politique, et principalement afin de libérer le nommé Minasoglou Ohanes.[a]

3. Que le nombre de paquets de poison qui avait été introduit dans la prison était de douze, dont il restait par suite onze encore dans une cachette.

4. La désignation de quelques personnes de la ville ayant plus ou moins directement ou indirectement contribué soit à l'évasion, soit par aide et protection aux divers prisonniers en tout temps.

A la suite de ces révélations, quatre arrestations ont été opérées dans la personne de quatre jeunes gens de notre ville, sans position, dont les noms me sont inconnus. Ils ont de 18 à 22 ans me dit-on.

[a] A notorious Armenian brigand.

Ces quatre jeunes gens ont été arrêtés le 30 Janvier, et très brutalement maltraités pendant plusieurs jours et cela continue encore.

Le 5 Février, à 6 heures du soir, il a été fait une perquisition chez le nommé Nazar Eukedikian, commissionnaire de notre ville, sous l'imputation de Caissier du Comité Politique Arménien. Le 6 du matin cet homme fut emprisonné.

Rien autre de saillant à vous signaler. La ville est très calme.

Veuillez, &c.

(Signé) H. DE CORTANZE.

No. 197.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 122.)

My Lord, *Pera, February 18, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of an extract from a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir in regard to the imprisonment of Armenians at Kharput and Dersim.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 197.

Acting Vice-Consul Boyajian to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)

(Extract.) *Diarbekir, January 28, 1895.*

I BEG to state that I have been informed from reliable sources that the police authorities in the Kharput Vilayet have lately doubled their activity in arresting and imprisoning Armenians under the pretext of their being political offenders.

In a village named Ertminik, close to the head-quarters of the province, a few Armenians were assembled in a house to spend the evening, as they do usually in the winter season, when the authorities were informed by the Chief (a Moslem of the village that the Armenians were assembled for seditious purposes, upon which accusation ten or twelve men were imprisoned without any trial whatever.

In Miadoun, an Armenian village belonging to Chimishgyek—one of the cazas of the Dersim Sandjak—in a house searched by the police, a receipt-book was found, among other papers, in which sums of money were recorded with the donors' names attached, and being questioned the owner of the book replied that they were contributions from the people for supporting the priest and the schoolmaster of the village.

This explanation was not accepted as satisfactory by the police, and therefore sixteen men, whose names were found in the book, were imprisoned at Khozat; fourteen others, who have been summoned from Aleppo, also were thrown into the same prison on the accusation that the money was contributed by them for revolutionary purposes.

I have also to add that my informant further communicates to me that the Turks (whose minds were already excited somewhat by obtaining information from the Constantinople papers concerning the late Sassoon affairs), after the above-stated arrests, became insolent towards the Christians, and when the prisoners above referred to arrived under guard from Aleppo at Kharput, on their way to Khozat, in passing through the bazaars they were shouted at and grossly insulted. I am also told that one of the Ulemas (Moslem clergy) went so far as to exhort his co-religionists, in a sermon delivered by him in one of the mosques, to arm themselves. Under these circumstances it was not unnatural that the Christians should take alarm and become panic stricken. The Ulema, however, was reprimanded both by the Governor-General and, as I am told, by some of the more sensible Ulemas; but the effect of his utterances remained uneffaced. Consequently, the relations between the two elements of the population were anything but pleasant. But it appears that the authorities are taking precautionary measures in order to prevent a breach of the public peace.

Taking into consideration the peculiar situation of the Diarbekir Vilayet, and that it might soon become contaminated with the same feeling that exists in Kharput, especially while the Governor-General is on leave in the capital, and, I regret to state,

without any hope of returning, I felt it my duty to call the attention of his Excellency Sir P. Currie to the fact, and state that it was urgently needed that the successor of the Vali should soon be nominated, and as you are aware of the antecedents of Anis Pasha, the Governor of Mardin, who is at present the substitute of the Governor-General, and of his administrative capacity, as also his general knowledge of the affairs of the vilayet, I ventured to state in my telegram that if Anis Pasha were nominated to the post, he would be perhaps the most suitable person, having every reason to believe that he was also recommended to the Porte by his Excellency Surri Pasha.

No. 198.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 123.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February 20, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No 44 of the 19th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond in regard to the case of Adoni Aslanian.

I am making inquiries respecting this case.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 198.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February 7, 1895.*

AS mentioned in the Memorandum accompanying my despatch of the 10th ultimo, Adoni Aslanian owned himself to be a revolutionist and was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

On the 23rd January, the condemned man petitioned me to have him removed to another ward of the Trebizond gaol, as not only he but others overheard one of the keepers say, in pointing him out to the Moslem inmates of his cell, "Do away with the life of this giaour." Cadri Bey not only had him removed to more congenial quarters, but severely reprimanded the prison official who, in spite of his denials, was cautioned to use in future more guarded language in the discharge of his duties.

I have further to report that the Minister of Justice has ordered the Vali to send Adoni Aslanian to Constantinople. He was conveyed yesterday on board the Turkish steamer without being either fettered or handcuffed, and in the custody only of one gendarme. His Excellency thinks the prisoner is merely wanted for transmission to the Boudrum Fort of the Smyrna vilayet. The Armenians think otherwise. They are inclined to believe that the object of the central Government is to torture him into revealing the secrets of the Revolutionary Committee.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 199.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 129.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February 21, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 52 of the 22nd ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum on the subject of the Bogaz Kessen case.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 199.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Erzeroum, February 4, 1895.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch of the 11th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting further on the alleged case of Armenian brigandage at Bogaz Kessen, and the irregularities said to have been committed by the Van authorities in dealing with this affair.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 199.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Van, January 26, 1895.

Sir,

IN my despatch of the 27th December last I had the honour to call your attention to a communication to the Turkish press from this vilayet, in which it was stated that the affair of Bogaz Kessen, reported in the above despatch, was being examined "before the eyes of the Consuls," and I pointed out that this statement was false, as the Consuls had had no opportunity of verifying the facts. Since then, however, an incident has occurred in connection with the case which is certainly calculated to open the eyes of the Consuls and others on the true nature of the case and the way it is being prosecuted by the authorities.

A young man named Simon Derkaroutounian, who was employed in the Tobacco Régie and also occasionally served as clerk to the Persian Consul-General, was arrested as an accomplice of the "Armenian brigands," but was released on the intervention of the Consul-General. A few days after he was again sent for by the Juge d'Instruction and confronted with two Kurds, who were asked if they saw him at the village on a certain day. The Kurds denied ever having seen him or knowing anything about him. Simon was then sent out of the room, and half-an-hour later was recalled and the two Kurds were again asked the same question; one of them gave an affirmative answer, but the others answered evasively. This was considered sufficient, and their evidence was written down as showing that Simon was at the village on the day in question. He would certainly have been imprisoned had not the Persian Consul-General again insisted on his release. As a matter of fact, Simon has never been to Bogaz Kessen in his life, and it is perfectly well known that he was at the office of the Tobacco Régie in Van on the day when he was said to have been at the village.

This is a fair sample of the administration of justice; perfectly innocent Armenians are thrown into prison, and cases trumped up against them no matter how.

It is now pretty certain that the principal culprits in the Bogaz Kessen affair were four Kurds of a neighbouring village, named Gendi, Bouro, Agit, and Alkan. None of them are in prison. There are twenty-three Armenians from Bogaz Kessen in prison. Among them a certain Bogos, whose sheep were stolen by the Kurds. They were arrested on the evidence of the Kurdish culprits themselves.

There are about thirty Armenians in all in prison now for this affair, a few having been released at Christmas.

A woman named Hoorig came from the same village to town a few days ago to present a petition to the Vali under the following circumstances.

The autumn before last her husband, Akbar, was bringing a load of hay to the village when he was attacked by the same Kurds, who tried to carry off his hay; he resisted and was badly wounded. Gendi then threatened to kill him for not letting him have the hay; he was in bed for six months, and his friends presented a petition to the Vali against Gendi with no result. Gendi again threatened to kill him, and in fact did so last autumn. Four young children of Akbar died soon after of fright caused by their father's death.

After that Gendi and his son Alkan tried to carry off Hoorig, the widow, but were prevented by zaptiehs who were in the village. Hoorig, however, is afraid to remain in the village and has come to town. When she presented her petition to the Vali against Gendi, the latter was there himself talking to his Excellency. It is certainly unsafe for

her to return to the village, as the Kurds would be sure to carry her off or kill her, sooner or later. The arrest and punishment of the Kurds is the only measure that would guarantee her security, and there is no prospect of that being done.

The villagers are suffering severely through no fault of their own, but for the crimes of the Kurds. Besides being robbed by the latter and imprisoned by the Government, they have had to maintain large numbers of zaptiehs for the last three months; and these, though affording a certain protection to the villagers, are also a heavy expense, as they and their horses have to be fed gratis.

An Armenian named Zakho, of the village of Ardavez, which was plundered by Kurds, as reported in my despatch of the 18th September last, is in the same position as Bogos, of Bogaz Kessen—he has been robbed of his sheep, &c., and is now in prison on some frivolous charge.

The above cases, which are by no means exceptional, may serve to show, if further evidence is wanted, whether the Government have any real wish to restrain the Kurds or not. A short time ago an old Kurd, whom the Vali reproached for his crimes, coolly answered, "If you were not on our side what could we do?"—an answer which puts the situation in a nut-shell.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 200.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 131.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, February 21, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 118, Confidential, of the 13th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum on the subject of the sentence passed on the Armoudan prisoners.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 200.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Erzeroum, February 5, 1895.

Sir,

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 28th ultimo, I had the honour to report by telegraph to-day that the Armoudan prisoners therein referred to were tried secretly at Erzingian, and not in the Erzeroum Court of Appeal, as stated by the Armenian Patriarchate. Their sentences are still kept a profound secret, and conflicting versions are current. The information given in my telegram of the 21st ultimo to the effect that none of them had been condemned to death, was communicated to me by the Armenian Archbishop, who had it confidentially from a high Turkish official. On the other hand, it is said that capital sentences pronounced upon a number of the prisoners were forwarded by the Erzeroum Procureur-Général to Constantinople, and returned confirmed.

Under the circumstances, it is practically impossible for me to learn the truth without applying officially for information to the Vali—a course which I am anxious to avoid, and even in that case it is not at all certain that I would be informed correctly. My supposition is, that it may be desired to avoid any foreign intervention, such as took place in the case of the Narman prisoners, by keeping the sentences secret, at least until the Government have made up their minds, whether it is politic to commute them, or to carry them out.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 201.

Foreign Office to the General Presbyterian Alliance.

Foreign Office, February 27, 1895.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Earl of Kimberley to acknowledge the receipt on the 19th instant of your letter, drawing attention to the difficulties placed in the way of freedom of religious worship by the local authorities in the Turkish Empire, and suggesting the appointment of British Consular Agents in some of the smaller towns of Eastern Asiatic Turkey with a view to improving the present situation.

I am to state that your communication shall receive careful attention, but that, both on account of expense and other considerations, there would be serious objections to such a large increase of the Consular staff in Turkey as the adoption of your proposal would entail.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 202.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 69.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 28, 1895, 11·40 A.M.

A LARGE number of Armenians, chiefly from among the lower classes, amounting altogether to about eighty, have been arrested during the last few days on the charge of collecting subscriptions in aid of the sufferers from the late massacres at Sassoon.

No. 203.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 70.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 28, 1895, 11·45 A.M.

THE Sultan has returned to the Armenian Patriarch his Memorial on the grievances of the Armenians, with a message to the effect that the matter would lead to "questions and answers," a Turkish phrase of rather a menacing character, if certain intimations which were conveyed to his Beatitude were not complied with.

The intimations were to the effect that the facts on which the Patriarch relied should be stated in the Memorial instead of references being given to former communications to the Porte, and that expressions of devotion to the Sultan must be added, and of reliance on his fatherly care and clemency.

After consulting his Lay Council and receiving their advice, his Beatitude declined to alter the Memorial.

When it has been re-copied it will be sent in again.

No. 204.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 71.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 28, 1895, 3 P.M.

I REFERRED the substance of your Lordship's telegram No. 20 to Mr. Graves, and he suggests asking the Russian Government to send a military surgeon to Moush from the Caucasus.

It would take a week to travel the distance.

I have communicated the above to M. de Nélidow.

No. 205.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 22.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February* 28, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram No. 69 of this day, stating that a number of Armenians have been arrested on a charge of having collected subscriptions for the sufferers from the disturbances in the Sassoon district.

This action of the Turkish authorities seems very oppressive and unjust, and, if the fact is borne out by evidence, your Excellency should address a remonstrance to the Porte on the subject, if possible in conjunction with your colleagues.

No. 206.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 91.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 28, 1895.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith an extract from the "Daily Telegraph" of the 27th instant, containing an account of the alleged massacres in the Sassoon district which has been communicated to the paper by its Special Correspondent at Moush.

Your Excellency will probably think it desirable to communicate the extract to Mr. Graves and Mr. Shipley.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 207.

Intelligence Division to Foreign Office.—(Received March 2.)

THE Director of Military Intelligence presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith a copy of a letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Picot, British Military Attaché, Tehran, dated the 21st January last, having reference to his recent visit to Azerbaijan.

Intelligence Division, 18, *Queen Anne's Gate*,
London, February 28, 1895.

Inclosure in No. 207.

Lieutenant-Colonel Picot to Lieutenant-General Chapman.

(Confidential.)
(Extract.) *Tehran, January* 21, 1895.

I RETURNED from Azerbaijan at the end of December, having been driven in by bad weather, but I have succeeded in making a thorough reconnaissance of the whole of the north-west corner as far as Mount Ararat. I went over every inch of the ground west of Tabreez to Bayazid, making a careful plane table of the country. I also marched along the Aras from Julfa to Ararat. My Report will be lengthy, as the country is almost quite new to us, and I cannot expect to get in the map and reports for some time, but am hard at work.

The country, though mountainous, is intersected by good roads, and at Makou I found the Chief, Timour Pasha Khan, his son and nephews, driving about in neat victorias and landaus, quite a civilized corner. The Chief, I take it, is the most powerful man in Azerbaijan, almost entirely independent of the Valiahd or the Shah. Nearly every Turk peasant and every Kurd in his territory is armed with a Martini or Berdenker, and the Chief could mass from 7,000 to 8,000 men—2,000 Kurds, 5,000 Turks—in ten days' time. His policy is, however, to remain on good terms with Persia, and he is therefore not dangerous. He will always be useful to Russia, as he can supply a large amount of wheat and grains, as he did during the last war, and can hold the Bayazid corner against any raiding Kurds from Turkey. There ends, I believe, the extent of his power. Bayazid seems of little importance from its isolated position. My experience of the

Kurds leads me to believe that they would be of little or no use in irregular bands, only those who have been trained and disciplined previous to the outbreak of war will be any value, and I question whether even they would be able to stand any punishment.

There are some 2,500 Kurd families near Makou, divided into three clans, who are not on the best of terms with one another. I rode right into one skirmish, and visited the scene of a fight between Timour Pasha Khan's Kurds, the Jelalis, and others of Taghar Khan of Kara Aineh; the latter were surprised and almost wiped out, losing about 180 killed and wounded out of 400 families. The affair was one of treachery and butchery, and I could not find that any courage had been shown by either side.

When at Makou I heard something of the so-called Armenian atrocities of Sassoon, and was lucky or unlucky enough to have had one personal experience of the Armenians, from which I argue badly of their case in Turkey. All the country from Julfa westward was once thickly peopled by Armenians, and their history can still be traced in deserted village and ruined church.

The few Armenian communities which at present remain to show that they once lived in the land are now protected by the Mahommedan Chiefs or Governors in the same way as our Hindoos in Afghanistan or Cabul. They are fairly well off, and, though subject to occasional pillage by the Kurds, do not suffer any more in that respect than the Turk peasant. It appears that after the Kurd fighting to which I have referred a party of the Kara Aineh faction, smarting after their defeat, raided one of the Armenian villages of Timour Pasha Khan, named Kara Kalissa. This village has a very fine old church, much venerated by Armenians, who make pilgrimages thither from Russia, Turkey, and Persia.

During my visit to Makou a large deputation of the Armenians, headed by the priest, waited on me to represent that this village had been pillaged, the church broken open and sacked of its valuables—the votive offerings of centuries—altogether a blood-curdling and harrowing story. I promised the people that I would visit the church and examine into the facts of the case. A week later I rode into Kara Kalissa, and found the church intact, not a stone touched, not a jewel removed. The local priest flung himself on the ground, and was ready to eat any amount of dirt when he found himself exposed. There was the usual grain of truth in the history as given me. The village had been raided, perhaps 100 sheep and cattle carried off. With some trouble, however, I extracted from the priest that these had been returned, and a receipt given to the Kurds concerned.

Later I visited the Kurdish village from whence the raid emanated, and found that fear of a future visitation from Timour Pasha Khan had induced the raiders to disgorge the stolen property. This was my first experience of the Armenians, and if those I have seen are fair specimens of their race, I cannot help but think our sympathy is much exaggerated, and that every word issuing from this people requires to be most carefully sifted on the spot.

No. 208.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 73.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 2, 1895, 4·30 P.M.

ACCORDING to a telegram received yesterday from Mr. Shipley, the Commission has been taking the evidence of the Armenians and Kurds mentioned by him in his telegram of the 12th February, which I repeated to your Lordship in my telegram No. 57.

One witness described the condition of the village of Gheliguzan as follows:—

"The houses burned, the fields devastated, the school-house desecrated, and the church pillaged and deserted."

The Kurdish witnesses gave evidence of attacks on them by Armenians, while the Armenians corroborated the evidence given by their countrymen, agreeing that villages were burned, and that the old people and children who were left behind were either massacred or perished in the flames.

No. 209.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 126.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 20, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 122 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo in regard to some Armenians arrested at that place and transferred to Kharput and Dersim.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 209.

Consul Barnham to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Aleppo, February* 10, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 28th ultimo, instructing me to report upon the arrest of fifteen Armenians at Aleppo on the 27th December last, and their transfer to Kharput.

Among the Armenians at Aleppo are natives of the Dersim, who, from time to time, as opportunity presents itself, send part of their earnings to their relatives residing in that province. Early in December a caravan left Aleppo for the Dersim, and with it a young Armenian named Kundunadji Nerses, who had been intrusted with a sum of 90 Turkish liras. He had with him a list of those who had sent the money, and of those to whom it was to be delivered.

On the arrival of the caravan at , a Mussulman village two hours' distant from Kozat, head-quarters of the Dersim Vilayet, it was discovered that this money was missing. The Armenian accused one of the muleteers of the theft, and the muleteer appears to have made a statement to the authorities that the money formed part of the funds of a Revolutionary Committee. Both were arrested and brought back to Kharput, the Vali of which place telegraphed to Aleppo, asking for the arrest and dispatch to Kharput of all those whose names figured on the list of contributors. The poor people in the Dersim for whom the money was intended were arrested at the same time.

On the 28th December these fifteen Armenians of Aleppo were transferred to Kharput for examination, but, on their arrival, were forwarded at once to the Dersim to join the others in the prison of Kozat. Thirteen days after their arrival they were interrogated by the Juge d'Instruction, when four were released on bail. The others (two excepted) remain in prison at Kozat without trial. The two exceptions are Stepan and Dhoud Tavidian (cousins), who died in the prison, which is described as being totally unfit for occupation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 210.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 134.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 23, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout, in which he describes a conversation with the Vali in regard to the Vilayet of Beyrout.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 210.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Beyrout, February* 12, 1895.

WHEN calling on the Vali to offer my congratulations on the Sultan's birthday, his Excellency informed me, in reply to inquiries as to the orders he had received regarding the issue of Teskerehs to foreigners, that he had telegraphed to the Sublime Porte for more explicit instructions on the subject.

Although the Vali was very reserved, I gathered from his demeanour that he is entirely opposed to the measures, and hoped that they would be modified.

He also referred to the late false reports in the English press as to the state of Beyrout, and begged that I would aid him in contradicting them, assuring me that the ordinary tourist routes through his vilayet to Damascus are perfectly safe.

With the exception of the Merj-Ayoun disturbances, reported in my despatch of the 4th instant, I have not received any information of a disquieting character from Consular officers as to the state of the provinces beyond this vilayet.

I may further mention that the Vali has lately established a service of about 150 watchmen, who patrol the streets of Beyrout at night in addition to the ordinary police. These measures were adopted in consequence of the murder of two Christians in December last, as reported in Mr. Eyres' despatch of the 5th December.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 211.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 136.)
My Lord, *Pera, February* 24, 1895.

WITH reference to Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 23 of the 13th January, 1894, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora, reporting a case of cruelty which occurred last month in the Yozgat prison.

I propose to call the attention of the Sublime Porte to this matter as showing the abuses that go on in the prisons in the Armenian provinces.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 211.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Angora, February* 18, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report a regrettable case of cruelty that occurred last month in the Yozgat prison.

About three weeks ago I received a communication (translation inclosed) from Gaspard Lordian, an Armenian prisoner at Yozgat, whose case has been brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Embassy in despatches of the 12th December, 1893, and of the 8th January, 1894, stating that he had been the victim of a foul outrage.

I immediately communicated the substance of the letter to the Vali, in order that he should make inquiries and have the perpetrators punished.

On receiving corroborative information from the Mutessarif of Yozgat, Memdouh Pasha ordered the dismissal of the two principal culprits, as well as that of the chief guardian, Kiamil Effendi, against whom criminal proceedings are to be instituted.

In my despatch of the 8th January, 1894, I had occasion to mention other instances of cruelty to which G. Lordian alleged having been subjected in the Tchoroum prison.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 211.

Gaspar Lordian to Consul Cumberbatch.

(Translation.) *(Received January* 26, 1895).

I FIRST kiss your hands, and in the second place I beg to be allowed to expose the various outrages to which we are subjected.

The following was committed on Tuesday (15th January?) :—

At the instigation of Kiamil Effendi, the chief guardian, Sivasli Oglou Hassan, and his comrades wounded me in several parts with knives; they outraged me, and finally thrust a broomstick into my hinder parts.

This made me faint, and I was insensible for fifteen minutes. I subsequently recovered my senses, but I am now in bed; my life is in danger; I have no hope of recovery.

It is entirely left to your mercy to apply wherever you may think fit.

Being unable to write myself I put some one else to do so in haste.

(Signed) GASPAR LORDIAN.

Their chief motive for doing this is the following :—

Some days ago a man named Simpat Effendi was arrested in the street. With him were brought two lads, whom they attempted to outrage. I had interfered with them, hence their rancour against me.

No. 212.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 77.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 6, 1895, 10·20 A.M.

MR. GRAVES telegraphs that the Delegates find that, notwithstanding the declarations of impartiality of the Turkish Commissioners, the inquiry is not being conducted in good faith. They consider that the presence of a Dragoman of their own, speaking Armenian and Kurdish, would be of great service in establishing the facts and eliciting the truth, besides giving confidence to the witnesses.

The Delegates also request authority to engage a copyist, as the work is at present very much in arrear, and they find it impossible to keep pace with it. Mr. Graves says that he and his colleagues are strongly in favour of granting this double request. They recommend an Armenian named Dikran Kevorkian, as capable of filling both posts. For 2*l.* 15*s.* a-month and his travelling expenses, he would be ready to undertake the duties.

The Porte should give formal assurances that they will not, either now or later, in any way annoy him on account of his accepting this temporary employment, and should now officially recognize him.

No. 213.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 78.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 6, 1895.

IN reply to Mr. Graves' telegram, repeated to your Lordship in my telegram No. 77, I telegraphed as follows :—

"There would be considerable difficulty as to protecting Kevorkian. You had better send to the Delegates a Dragoman from one of the Consulates, who might, if necessary, be accompanied by a Kurdish translator.

"You and your colleagues should settle on whom to send."

No. 214.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 95.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 6, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 91 of the 28th ultimo, I transmit, for your Excellency's information and for communication to Mr. Graves and Mr. Shipley, copies of a further report on the state of affairs in Bitlis and the surrounding districts, which appeared in the "Daily Telegraph" of yesterday.*

The writer speaks of the fanatical spirit which is being manifested by the Mahommedan population, and the danger of ill-treatment and even of massacre to which the Christians are exposed.

I have no doubt that your Excellency will consult with the French and Russian Ambassadors on any facts which may come to your knowledge of a nature to cause anxiety, and will make such representations to the Porte as you may think necessary with a view to proper measures being taken by the Turkish Government for the protection of the Armenian and other Christian inhabitants of the districts referred to.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 215.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 7.)

(No. 79.)
Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 7, 1895, 10·15 A.M.

THE Delegates telegraph that an Armenian delegation had come to Moush to give evidence before the Commission, confirmatory of that already given by Armenian witnesses. The Delegates are five in number. The Turkish Commissioners, however, seem inclined to believe the accusations which the Kurdish witnesses are bringing against them, of being the leaders of the Armenian revolt.

No. 216.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 25.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March* 7, 1895.

IN my despatches Nos. 91 and 95 of the 28th February and 6th instant respectively I forwarded to your Excellency extracts from the "Daily Telegraph" containing letters said to have been received from a special correspondent of that newspaper at Moush.

As questions are being asked in the House of Commons as to the authenticity of these letters, I should be glad if you could obtain from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, or from some other source, information which could be given in Parliament as to whether they actually came from Moush, and whether it is possible for a courier to cover the distance between Moush and Kars in seventy-two hours, as asserted in the "Daily Telegraph."

No. 217.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 80.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 8, 1895, 6·50 P.M.

REFERRING to your Lordship's telegram No. 24, the Acting Vali of Bitlis reports that there is no danger of any Mussulman outbreak in his vilayet. The Grand Vizier declares that he has given him stringent instructions to maintain order.

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* "Daily Telegraph," March 5, 1895.

No. 218.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 9.)

(No. 81.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 9, 1895, 10·45 A.M.

ON receipt of your Lordship's telegram No. 25 I telegraphed to Mr. Graves, and have now received his reply.

He says that a courier could carry despatches from Moush to Kars in seventy-two hours, weather permitting. He has not seen the reports in the "Daily Telegraph," and, therefore, cannot say whether they are authentic, or whether they come from Moush.

(Very Confidential.)

Mr. Dillon showed Mr. Graves his first telegram, dated from Moush on the 18th February, the contents of which seemed to be substantially correct. Mr. Graves trusts that no use will be made of this information that might cause any annoyance to Mr. Dillon, or perhaps lead to his expulsion, as the telegram was shown to him in strictest confidence.

No. 219.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 137.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 28, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting upon the state of affairs in the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 219.

Acting Consul Meshaka to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Damascus, February* 13, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report, for your Excellency's information, that Sheikh Shibly Attrash, the newly-appointed Kaimakam of Jebel Druse of the Hauran, came lately into Damascus to thank the Vali for the appointment.

His Excellency made him a present of an old gilt sword, a cloak worked richly with gold, and a head cover, and availed himself afterwards of the opportunity to talk with him, in order to secure public order, on account of complaints of highway robberies and other abuses committed by his co-religionists against their neighbouring Mahommedan and Christian villages.

Sheikh Shibly reported various ill-treatments towards his followers by the people of the Meidan of Damascus, and begged the Vali to cite certain religious Druse Chiefs to enable him to effect his Excellency's end.

The Vali convoked a meeting of Notables in the Meidan, and made them responsible for any arbitrary actions of their followers. His Excellency cited also three religious Druse Sheikhs of the Hauran, and they were made to sign a document engaging themselves, with Sheikh Shibly, to put a stop to highway robberies and other abuses complained of, to prohibit any of the Druses from occupying Mahommedan or Christian villages, to prevent the shelter of any highwaymen in their district, to restore the cattle taken away, and to pay the Government taxes.

Part of the cattle have been returned, but these Sheikhs begged his Excellency to summon the Notable Sheikhs of the Slut Arabs of the "Lejah" to render themselves responsible for their followers, and to require them to restore the booty in which they had participated. This his Excellency promised to do. The religious Chiefs returned home, but Sheikh Shibly is still in Damascus with the intention of remaining for some time.

Excitement amongst some Christians was caused by some groundless reports

circulated in town some time ago, arising from the fact that some Kurds had lately come to Salhych, of Damascus, from Kurdistan, the number of whom it was impossible to ascertain, but, according to the best information, the number was about 500. Kurds frequently come to Salhych, but the late events in Armenia attracted the attention of some of the Christians to their arrival, who also gave an erroneous interpretation to the meeting in the Meidan, here above alluded to, convoked by the Vali in the interest of the Druses.

I have, &c.
(Signed) NASIF MESHAKA.

No. 220.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 138.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 28, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 136 of the 24th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora, reporting the trial of Gaspar Lordian and his companions at Yuzgat.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 220.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Angora, February* 22, 1895.

WITH reference to previous despatches relative to the case of Gaspar Lordian, of Hadji Keui, and his four companions, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that their long-delayed trial has been concluded at Yuzgat.

Gaspar Lordian, his brother-in-law Avédis Akashian, and Séropé Téimian, have been sentenced to penal servitude for life; and Hohannes Lordian, the father, and G. Agop Lordian, the uncle of Gaspar, to five years.

The death sentences passed on the first three in 1893 are thus altered to life imprisonment, whilst the sentences on the other three prisoners remain the same.

As no fresh evidence against any of these men appears to have been produced, but, on the contrary, the testimony of the witnesses called on their behalf having been in their favour, I have no reason to change the opinion expressed in my despatch of the 8th January, 1894, as to the merits of this case, which has been sent for final revision to the Court of Cassation at Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

P.S.—The previous despatches on this subject are: No. 24 of the 12th December, No. 25 of the 13th December, 1893; No. 4 of the 8th January, No. 21 of the 27th February, No. 52 of the 19th July, No. 61 of the 18th September, 1894; No. 14 of the 18th February, 1895.

H. A. C.

No. 221.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 139.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 28, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond in regard to the civilities of Halil Bey to Dr. Jewett, and the departure of the Vali for Amassia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 221.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February* 15, 1895.

IN his letter of the 4th instant, Dr. Jewett inserts the following paragraph:—

"On the evening of the 1st February the Vali gave an official dinner. He proposed my health in a speech in which he spoke of his profound and sincere friendship for me. During the evening he received a telegram which led to his hasty departure for Amassia. I am told that about a week ago revolutionary placards, English and American newspapers, containing articles on the Armenian question, and Hunchagist revolutionary papers, were distributed at Amassia. The Vali was instructed by the Grand Vizier (*on dit*) to use his own discretion in regard to going to Amassia or not. The evening of the dinner he received a telegram from the Minister of the Interior, telling him that he would be held accountable for the conduct of affairs at Amassia. So he left. There are some indications that he thought he might not return here. There is reason for believing that Halil Bey is jealous of the increasing strength and popularity of Bekir Pasha, the Mutessarif of Amassia. . . ."

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 222.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 140.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 28, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond in regard to the Duslahissar prisoners at Sivas.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 222.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February* 15, 1895.

THE following is another extract from Dr. Jewett's letter of the 4th instant:—

"On the 3rd February, 1894, I reported the arrest of some Armenians at Duslahissar. Eighteen were brought here, including one Duslahissarli from Constantinople who has not yet been tried. Six were discharged, eleven were tried and sentenced (a priest for life) in one hearing about five months ago.

"I feel convinced that the evidence against them was almost or entirely false. The case was appealed to Constantinople, but no answer was given out here.

"Friends of the prisoners tell me that a few days ago the Vali's servant told them that if they would pay 150*l.* they would be out in a few days.

"People have said before that the Vali's Agha asks for money occasionally, but it is the first instance I have personally heard of. Consul King intimated a year or so ago that the Vali took bribes occasionally.

"If you wish to do anything for the Duslahissar prisoners I can give you additional information."

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 223.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 141.)
Constantinople, February 28, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, inclosing copy of a letter from Dr. Jewett in regard to the political condition of the interior.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 223.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Trebizond, February 18, 1895.

Sir,

I INCLOSE herewith copy of a letter from Dr. Jewett, describing as anything but satisfactory, and somewhat alarming, the relations existing between Mahommedans and Christians in the interior.

Your Excellency will perceive that the Province of Sivas is also sadly in need of reforms, a fact which will perhaps be remembered when provision is made for the good government of Kurdistan, &c.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 223.

The Rev. Dr. Jewett to Consul Longworth.

Sivas, February 12, 1895.

Dear Mr. Longworth,

AFFAIRS remain *in statu quo* in this region. Yesterday the Sultan's birthday was celebrated in the usual way, except that the Consuls were received by the Kadi (who is Acting Governor-General in the absence of the Vali) one hour after the time designed for the reception of other people, and at the time of their reception the troops and most of the zaptiehs had been withdrawn. The Kadi gave us an explanation that he wished to relieve the Consuls from the "kalabalic" by having them come after all the rest of the people had gone. I am inclined to think, however, that he did so because he wished to show the people that he did not receive the foreign Consuls with the high officials and military honours. This view of the case is strengthened by a very undiplomatic remark of his Reverence the Kadi on this occasion. In the presence of the French Consul and myself he remarked that, although he had never called on us, he had strong desire to do so. His not calling was not due to any lack of friendly consideration, he said, but because, being the Head of the Mahommedan religion, and the people being very fanatical, it would not be wise for him to show himself friendly with the foreign Christians.

This Kadi has been at various important stations, where he has been brought in contact with a considerable number of foreigners.

I mention this little affair as an indication of the present feeling.

I doubt if the foreign Governments are aware of the strength of the fanatical hatred which now exists in the less intelligent Mahommedans of the interior towards the Christians, and the danger to lives and property of Christians in case the social and political order should be disturbed by events of a serious national character.

The ever-increasing discomfort, hardship, poverty, and despair of the people are attributed to Christian and foreign influence. The great decline of business, and the loss of friendly commercial and social relations between Mahommedans and Armenians is attributed to the revolutionary spirit of the Armenians, fostered by foreign influence. The Governors have publicly told the people that all the troubles of the Empire are due to the foreigners. Owing to the *laissez-faire* policy pursued by foreign Powers towards Turkey of late years the Mahommedans no longer have either the fear or the respect for a foreigner which the wearer of a hat formerly inspired.

The missionaries, formerly regarded as a harmless and insignificant element of

society, have come to be feared and hated for the disturbing influence it is seen education and Western ideas introduce into the unprogressive nation.

The blind and cruel policy which has been pursued by the Government towards the Armenian revolutionists has increased the hatred of the Mahommedans towards the Armenians, and given them the impression that they also are doing the Sultan's and Allah's will when they maltreat the Armenians.

This is shown at present by a constant overbearing conduct and unlawful disregard of commercial obligations. In the event of serious disturbances I think it would be demonstrated by bloodshed.

Yesterday the Armenian Catholic Archbishop, while going in grand uniform to pay his respect to the Representative of the Sultan, was spit upon by some one in the yard of the Government House—he thinks by a Turk maliciously. To-day, he says, some fanatical Turks near the entrance to the city threw stones at him as he was riding into town, and one of the stones tore a hole in his carriage.

Halil Bey on several occasions has professed to pursue a course which was obviously unjust towards the Armenians, because he feared a contrary course might raise the ill-feelings of the Mahommedans. It was for that reason he refrained from arresting any of the Turks who, without adequate cause, plundered and wounded numerous Armenians at Tokat on the night of the 1st September.

I am convinced that it is the same feeling or policy, and not a lack of personal regard, which keeps certain intelligent Turkish officials, who were formerly very sociable and "neighbourly," from calling on the foreign residents.

Quite recently at Kharput a prominent Ulema in preaching in the mosque exhorted the faithful to provide themselves with arms, to be prepared for emergencies. He was afterwards told that it was not wise to give such advice in public, and the next week he attempted to smooth the matter over. The gunsmiths are said to be all crowded with work for the Turks. The Armenians are not permitted to have any form of arms, and at Sivas the manufacture of large meat and bread knives for the Armenians has been prohibited.

Permit me to quote passages touching on this general topic from letters recently received. A cool and experienced observer in the Diarbekir Vilayet says:—

"Aside from the massacre, the present condition of the country, the overbearing attitude of the Turks, the suspicion and oppression of the Government towards so many inoffensive Armenians, the constant fear of the Christian part of the population, &c., these are a sufficient reason for intervention. The country has never been in its present state at any previous time.

"While I have been writing this, a poor pedlar has been telling me of the impossibility of following his trade, especially in the villages, because he is plundered by the Turks.

"The Turks have the idea that the Armenians are at enmity with them, although the Armenians are deferential to the point of sycophancy; so the Turks treat them as enemies. This strained relation, it seems to me, is an element of danger and cannot continue long."

An old resident of Turkey, who has especially good opportunities for getting at facts in regard to the Armenians, writes in regard to Malatia:—

"As far as I could see, there is no sympathy with those in rebellion, but the best of the community deeply deplore the course of that society. . . . . There is stagnation in business, perplexity, anxiety, and fear. Of late letters have come from Armenians (abroad) blindly speaking of events to happen in the spring, of an anticipated 'flood' for which we must prepare, of 'ship' waiting and ready on a certain sea.

"One man wrote his father plainly to buy guns and pistols. Men write as if they expected to return in the spring. All this causes much conjecture and really great distress. . . . . The fear seems to be that Russia has something to do with it, that she will only work to grasp some of the border provinces, and that in the interior more oppression and slaughter than we have ever seen must be the result of such a movement. The people are in a state of quiet despair with no protection, those who are guiltless even, fearing imprisonment and death or an uprising among the ruling race at any moment. . . . . I cannot but think that all the means possible should be taken beforehand to prevent us (foreigners) all being slaughtered like so many innocent lambs, for we have none of us any means of protection."

It seems to me that the above quotations are a very fair statement of the situation as it appears at present.

Letters from Bitlis indicate that the Americans there are in a very considerable fear for their safety.

Another element of especial danger to life and property in case of any break in the national stability are the Circassians, and especially the Hamidieh volunteer regiments.

When we called on the Commandant Pasha yesterday, he was not present, and the officers said he was obliged to attend to his mail. People say he received orders to have the army reserve ready for marching order in two weeks. The statement is not confirmed.

Armenians say that the Mustentik is visiting certain Armenian villages in the region of Kochissar and imprisoning the people, because he says there are revolutionists and Armenian brigands there, and they failed to report it to the Government.

The placards distributed at Amassia about ten days ago are supposed to have been printed by a certain Armenian named Hannah. He is now in prison. The placards said certain of the most respected old Armenian residents were chiefs of the Revolutionary Committee. A number of Armenians were arrested and subsequently let out. Everything is reported quiet there now.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) A. JEWETT.

No. 224.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 11.)

(No. 143.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 2, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, forwarding copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van in regard to the treatment of Sassoon prisoners at Bitlis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 224.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 14, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, containing information which he has obtained from Bitlis as to the treatment of the Sassoon prisoners there, the examination of the prisoner Mourad, and some of the proceedings of the ex-Vali, Tahsin Pasha, before his dismissal. I have forwarded to Mr. Shipley a copy of this despatch for his information.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 224.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, January* 31, 1895.

THE following information has been furnished me from a trustworthy source from Bitlis. The letter containing it was dated the 23rd December, but was delayed more than a month in the post:—

"A Sassoon prisoner was so beaten on his way here that he died soon after. Two others have since died. They had been repeatedly beaten, half starved, and, in this cold weather and in these damp dungeons, had on only a course, ragged cotton shirt and drawers. Inquisitorial methods are being used to get these prisoners to testify that the leading Armenians here, now in prison, have been in league with them. Now that the Commission is afoot, they want them to testify that the Government had

nothing to do with destroying villages, but merely stepped in to restore order between them and the Kurds.

"Murad Effendi and his companions were up for trial on Thursday. He said he was a native of Hadjin, in the Adana Vilayet, had studied medicine in Constantinople, Athens, and Geneva. Had come to Sassoon to teach people chiefly two things—not to sell their daughters in marriage, and to resist the unjust exactions of the Kurds. He had given guns to the five young men, mere striplings, who were there with him, that they might the better defend themselves against the Kurds, since they were never able to get redress through the Government. The five young men, his companions, substantiated what he said. They were repeatedly asked if he had not promised English assistance against the Government. Four denied it; the fifth said he had not heard him say so, but had heard others say that he had said so.

"There seems no doubt that there was a plan in some way to get papers away from Mr. Hallward, but his going the direct way into Van territory instead of round by Melazguird defeated the plan. The four zaptiehs who took him on to Akhlat, on their return to Dzigak, where he had spent the night, accused some men of having talked with him, and did not let them off till they had received something. Several days after Mr. Hallward was there a zaptieh cruelly beat a man about some tax matter, pulled his moustache, and spat in his mouth, and as a result of this treatment the man became so crazy that he has had to be bound with ropes.

"The Government is not content with what it has already done. It has ordered the Kurds in the Khonit district (adjacent to the devastated region) to treat the Armenians there in the same way. But last week, from news of the composition and purpose of the Commission, they were led to issue countermands and dispatch them at once with zaptiehs and troops to keep the peace till the Commission shall get away. A reliable man has seen a copy of the countermand, and there is no doubt about the facts.

"There is a desperate effort being made to convict the Armenian Notables, now some twenty in number in prison, of complicity with Sassoon. In some way they got the deposition of an Armenian young man to a statement that these men had something to do with the Consul, and that they were disturbers of the peace. The young man has succeeded in sending a telegram to Constantinople, saying that the men are innocent, and that the signature was got by unfair means. The Government is in search of that young man, but cannot find him."

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 225.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 11.)

(No. 144.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 2, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, inclosing copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, in regard to the attitude of the authorities of the latter place towards Christians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 225.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 14, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the attitude of the Government authorities in that vilayet towards the Christians, and the uneasy feeling now existing among the latter.

Mr. Hallward holds that the Vali of Van, Bahri Pasha, is largely answerable for

the present unsatisfactory condition of affairs on account of his repeated endeavours to show that agitation and disorder reign among the Armenians of the province; and he cites the affair of Boguz Kessen, referred to in my despatch to your Excellency of the 4th instant and preceding despatches, and the case of the bookseller Dikran, which formed one of the subjects of the official communication published in the "Tarik," and inclosed in your Excellency's despatch to me of the 6th ultimo. In support of this opinion, and as typical examples of this Vali's policy I had the honour to express a somewhat similar view in my despatch to your Excellency of the 1st February.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 225.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, February 2, 1895.*

A CERTAIN feeling of uneasiness at present exists among the Armenians of this town, chiefly caused by remarks made by Turks, and the general attitude of the Government towards the Christians. An officer entered a coffee-house a few days ago in a state of intoxication, and began cursing the Armenians, saying that they ought all to be hung, and, when given coffee by the Armenian waiter, said he would not take it from the hand of a "ghiaour."

On their Christmas it is the custom of the Armenians to exchange visits among themselves, and to receive visits from the Turks, but this year the Turks in general abstained from paying them any visits. There is really no special ill-feeling between the local Turks and Armenians, but the former take their cue from the Government.

I do not think there is real cause for fear of an outbreak against the Christians in this town at present, but there is a conviction among all classes of the population, Armenians, Turks, and foreigners, that matters have been brought to a crisis by the Sassoon massacre; and that, unless effectual steps are taken to safeguard the life, honour, and property of the Christians, similar scenes will be repeated in this province, and existence rendered impossible to the Christian population. Indeed, it is only the hope that the present régime will not continue indefinitely that makes life tolerable to them now.

I can well believe that such fears may seem exaggerated or baseless to any one not personally acquainted with the country and local administration. People ask, Why should the Turks be animated by any special hostility towards the Armenians? Without attempting to answer that question, I will merely observe as a fact that all the local officials, high and low, are penetrated with the idea that any act of oppression or injustice towards Armenians will be overlooked, if not actually rewarded, by their superiors; an idea which has also taken root and borne fruit among the Kurds of the country districts.

Moreover, it is to their interest to maintain the friction of a perpetual Armenian agitation, which is only prevented from breaking out into open revolt by their zealous efforts in the interests of law and order. The maintenance of this friction serves the double purpose of a means of extortion from the Armenians, such as was practised by the Vali of Bitlis, and is here practised on a smaller scale by the subordinate officials, and of a means of promotion for those who distinguish themselves by their zeal in repressing Armenian "sedition."

An example in this respect is set by the Vali of Van, who uses every possible means to show that agitation and disorder reign among the Armenians of this province. I have already had the honour to call your attention to the false report promulgated by him about Armenian brigands at Boguz Kessen (*vide* my despatches of the 27th December and 26th January), which appeared in the European press, and I now see another communication from the Vali of Van to the Porte, published in the London press (*vide* "Daily News," 9th January), to the effect that a bookseller named Dikran has been arrested on a charge of having in his possession a large number of seditious publications. This charge is as groundless as that brought against the villagers of Boguz Kessen of committing acts of brigandage.

It seems that the Vali is not yet satisfied with the number of Armenians imprisoned (twenty-eight now) on trumped-up charges in connection with this latter

affair, but is trying also to incriminate a certain Gabriel Natanian. This young man came about two years ago from Constantinople, where he had studied law, and set up here as a lawyer, hiring and furnishing part of a house as an office. He was lately summarily turned out of his office by the Vali without compensation, on the plea that it was required for Government purposes, by which he incurred a loss of some 20*l.*, rent having been paid in advance. Some of the villagers have, I hear, been beaten to make them give evidence that he was at Boguz Kessen on the day when the zaptieh was killed, but they refused, and hitherto he has not been arrested, though he expects to be. His brother, Rupen Natanian, was arrested on the ground that he was at Boguz Kessen at the time, though it is well known that he was then being treated by a doctor in Van; he is still in prison.

His cousin, Dschelador Natanian, is also in prison on the same charge.

I have been consulted as to the advisability of the Armenians in prison here sending a telegram to Constantinople, to ask that the Commission of Inquiry at Moush may come here to examine their cases, but I said that, as far as I knew, the Commission had simply been appointed to inquire into the Sassoon affair, and that, in any case, I could not be responsible for advising them to take such a step. At the same time, if there is any possibility of the Commission coming here after finishing its other work, I would earnestly recommend that it should do so, if there is no other way of obtaining justice for the prisoners here. I know of upwards of fifty Armenians who are in prison on absolutely unfounded charges, and there are many others in prison who are probably in the same position, but whose cases I am not so well acquainted with.

It is impossible for me to judge of the merits of each individual case, but a Commission, partly composed of Europeans, with power to examine the cases of all the Armenian prisoners, could throw a flood of light on the methods of the local administration.

It would also be desirable to examine the sanitary condition of the prisons, and to ascertain how the prisoners are treated. The Persian Consul-General wanted to visit the prison where two or three of his subjects are confined, but the Vali would not allow him to; he offered to have the prisoners brought before him to be questioned, but would not allow the Consul to question them alone.

Karekin, the prisoner mentioned in my despatches of the 8th and 14th January, is confined alone in a small, damp cell, with no fire and no windows, but a hole in the roof, with heavy chains rivetted to his neck, hands, and legs. As he has been condemned to ten years imprisonment for so-called political offences, I should doubt whether the authorities have the right to treat him differently to other prisoners. The others are crowded together in rooms where there is barely space for all of them to lie down at night; only those of strong constitution can stand the foul air and bad treatment they receive for any length of time.

It would be a great relief to the population if the present Vali could be removed; a temporary successor could easily be found in Munir Pasha, Commander of the Redifs, who has often acted before, and who, though not a man of much ability, is more humane and reasonable character than the Vali.

The Armenians of this province are, and have been for a long time past, absolutely impassive in spite of the gross injustice which they suffer at the hands of the Vali and his subordinates. In fact they can scarcely be otherwise, for, though numerous, they are without arms or means of resisting the authorities. To represent them as being in a state of dangerous agitation is not only false but absurd. Their present feeling is one of deep discontent with their condition, and great anxiety for the future.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

P.S.—A rich Yezedi named Khalil, from the village of Chiboukli, beyond Boguz Kessen, told the Vali that he could tell him exactly who were the men who had stolen the sheep and murdered the zaptieh near the latter village; that they were all Kurds, and why did the Vali persecute the Armenians for this matter? His Excellency replied that if he said another word on the subject he would ruin him.

C. M. H.

No. 226.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 146.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 2, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from the Rev. Mr. Edington, of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Nestorians, complaining of the conduct of the Turkish authorities of the Vilayet of Van in interfering with the schools of the Patriarch Marshimun.

Said Pasha, to whose notice Mr. Block, by my instruction, brought the matter yesterday, at first declined to listen to my representations, on the ground that the right of Great Britain to interfere in the affairs of Marshimun and the Nestorians could not be recognized.

He finally, however, promised to take note of the facts, and to endeavour to have orders sent in the sense desired, though he said he would not mention to the Grand Vizier that his information came from this Embassy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 226.

Rev. A. Edington to Sir P. Currie.

English Mission House, Urmi, Persia, January 28, 1895.

Your Excellency,

I BELIEVE your Excellency already knows that several years ago the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the urgent and repeated request of Marshimun, the Nestorian Patriarch of the Syrian Christians, sent a Mission to establish schools in the country inhabited by the Patriarch's people. These schools are taught by native teachers, and in them the children are instructed in their own faith. They are also taught to read and write; no English is taught in them, and in no way are the children anglicized. In some of them, where the children are capable of receiving such instruction, a little Turkish in the Turkish or Persian in the Persian country, the Government language is taught. I wish, however, to emphasize the fact that the children are not in the very least anglicized.

The Turkish officials are continually making the unfounded assertion that these schools are established with a political end in view, and, therefore, they endeavour to frustrate them in every way and by every means in their power.

I can assure your Excellency that they are nothing else than church schools of Marshimun, established at his request. The English Mission supplies only some elementary Syriac books, the teachers (from the Syrians themselves), and a very small salary for these teachers. As a matter of fact, of recent years we have refrained from visiting these schools in Turkey, from fear of increasing the suspicion of the local Turkish authorities. Notwithstanding these precautions, a short time since the Vali of Van, being at Marbishu, caused to be seized the Syriac lesson books, and, after seriously threatening the teachers, took from them, I am told, £T. 1½ each, *i.e.*, about half their wages for the session. This was done contrary to the promise made in the summer by the Vali to Marshimun, that promise being that the schools of the Patriarch should not be interfered with.

It is now too late for anything to be done about these schools this winter, but I desire to ask your Excellency if orders could be sent that in future these schools of Marshimun (for they are only carried on by us at his request and by his authority) should not be closed, and the teachers fined and threatened with imprisonment.

These schools, chiefly where trouble was made this year by the Turkish authorities, were those of Marbishu, Pagi, and Iyal, Turkish villages on the Persian frontier, but much the same thing happens from time to time with regard to schools situated in other parts of the Syrian country, *e.g.*, Gawar and Quoshanis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ARTHUR R. EDINGTON,
Head of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians.

No. 227.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 148.)
My Lord, *Pera, March 5, 1895.*

ON the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 10 of the 29th January last relative to the interference of the Turkish authorities with the exercise of religious liberty in the Ottoman Empire, I requested Dr. Dwight, the Honorary Secretary of the Constantinople Committee of the Evangelical Alliance, to furnish me with any facts in his possession in support of the statements contained in the communication from the London Evangelical Alliance Council (inclosed in your Lordship's above-mentioned despatch), and I have now the honour to transmit to your Lordship copies of a letter and its inclosures which I have received from him in reply.

I inclose also Memoranda by Mr. Block and Messrs. Stavrides and Marinitch, embodying their views on this question.

I have already spoken to my Austrian and French colleagues in regard to the matter, and I propose to communicate to them, as well as to the Representatives of the Protestant Powers at Constantinople, viz., the German Ambassador, and the United States', Swedish, and Netherland Ministers, a Memorandum relating to the various cases which have been brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Embassy in connection with the difficulties and hindrances raised by the Turkish authorities in religious and educational matters. Should I find that they have similar cause for complaint, I will endeavour to agree with them on some course of action.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 227.

Dr. Dwight to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Constantinople, February 12, 1895.*

IN response to your Excellency's request for facts elucidating the communication to Lord Kimberley of the Council of the Evangelical Alliance in London, dated the 23rd January, 1895, I have the honour to submit the accompanying paper on behalf of the local Committee of the Evangelical Alliance.

In the text of the Hatti-Humayoun of 1856, and the Circular of the Sublime Porte of the 15th May, 1867, concerning its execution (see "Législation Ottomane," vol. 2, p. 24), we have as basis of our study the letter of the Charter, together with an official statement of the obligations assumed therein by the Ottoman Government, and of the progress made in its execution ten years after its promulgation.

Comparing with these documents a mass of well-attested facts of the recent internal Administration of Turkey, we find, respecting the design of the Charter to remove disabilities in civil rights which were imposed on Christians in Turkey by reason of religious prejudice, that the Hatti-Humayoun has been disregarded since 1880 as follows:—

1. In its 12th, 31st, and 34th sections (the number of sections as given in "Législation Ottomane") by an increasing exclusion of Christians from responsible offices under Government.

2. In its 21st and 22nd sections by the extensive reintroduction of torture of witnesses and prisoners.

3. In its 8th and 9th sections by the gradual return by officials to the use of insulting language towards Christianity.

4. In its 1st section by the subjection of the enjoyment of property by Christians to the will of individual officials or private parties in the eastern provinces. In these provinces not only have Armenian and Nestorian Christians been robbed on a large scale without efforts to protect them being made since 1889, but large numbers of Moslems have been settled on the lands from which Christians had been driven by violence.

These facts appear to indicate a reactionary policy of Government which in its more extreme results amounts to a sort of war upon the Christians of those regions.

In the field of the specific provisions of this Charter for securing toleration and liberty for the exercise of the rites of the Christian religion, and freedom for the educational development of Christians, we consider that the Hatti-Humayoun has been practically annulled in the following Articles:—

5. Articles 11 (since 1891) by the attempt to make the holding of Christian worship depend upon specific authorization from the authorities, and again by the official declaration (*Note verbale* S. P., 17th September, 1894, to Her Majesty's Embassy) that the act of worship, which is a right, is subjected to the same régime as the construction of churches, which is a favour, so that Christians may not hold worship unless the assent of the Sovereign in person has been given in each case.

6 and 7. Article 15 by the progressive limitation of the right of education since 1884. This limitation has taken the form of the claim to suppress community schools of Christians (*a*) on account of technical deviations of hired teachers from the laws of control over the methods of education; (*b*) since 1892 on account of the lack of individual permits granted after consideration of the expediency of the existence of each school; and (*c*) since 1894 on account of the claim that the right of Christians to have schools must depend upon the consent of the Sovereign to the existence of each school.

8. The trend of these measures toward the suppression of intellectual culture among the Christians of Turkey. The alarming character of this trend is further illustrated by a series of administrative acts which since 1887 have terrorized the possessors of Christian books, have deprived the teachers of Christian schools of the lawful means of attaining proficiency in their profession, have destroyed the book trade in large regions, and have barred to the graduates of all Christian schools entrance to office in Government Departments. Since 1893 a more rigorous and more partisan application of the censorship of the press has subjected expositions of Christian doctrine to Mahommedan ideals, has prohibited to Christian writers in numberless cases the quotation of appropriate texts of Holy Writ, and has even undertaken to prohibit instruction of Christians in many essentials of their own religion, and to mark as illegal that lawful growth in manhood which is the normal fruit of Christianity.

All these harmoniously progressive measures of restriction being constantly explained and justified by Ottoman officials on the ground that Christian instruction has been found to arouse in the people aspirations toward a higher degree of manliness, and the cultivation of such lawful aspirations being in fact the normal aim of Christianity, we are brought face to face with the conclusion that these aggressions upon the Charter of Christian rights in Turkey constitute a direct war upon the Christian religion itself, as producing results obnoxious to the present Ottoman policy.

The paper herewith inclosed, together with the printed "Appeal of 1891," which is appended to it, give facts in support of these statements sufficient in number, and yet we hope not unmanageably voluminous. Our only difficulty has been to select from the mass of facts in hand.

We hope that your Excellency will accept the assurance that in the preparation of this paper we have been led by no prejudice of hostility to the Ottoman Government, or by desire to file an indictment against it. Rather have we made these statements as well-wishers of the Empire, who, seeing indications of what we deem a fatal error of policy, point out its tendencies in the hope that it may not yet be too late, by a return to sound principles, to avert its disastrous results.

We should add, the statements of this paper are the unanimous expression of the Evangelical Alliance, composed of five members of the British, and three of the American, Colony in this city.

Unless your Excellency sees objection to our doing so, we wish to present a copy of the inclosed paper to the Minister of the Queen of the Netherlands, who is interested in these matters, and to the British Evangelical Alliance, which probably reached its conclusions from a series of facts in some respect differing from those here presented.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. O. DWIGHT,
Honorary Secretary.

Inclosure 2 in No. 227.

Memorandum on recent Deviations from the Requirements of the Hatti-Humayoun.

THE Hatti-Humayoun of 1856 was a Charter of liberty and equality to the Christians of Turkey. Fuad Pasha, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, ten years after the issue of this Charter, reviewed the progress made in its execution. He gave the following just characterization of the situation of non-Moslems in Turkey before 1856, and then explained the aim of the Charter itself: "The subjects of the Sultan were divided into two classes, separated one from the other by a prejudice apparently invincible—a ruling class represented by the Mussulmans, and an inferior class, entirely subordinated to the authority of the first, and represented by the *non-Mussulman* population." The aim of the Hatti-Humayoun he describes to be the carrying into effect of the principle of equality between the Mussulman and non-Mussulman populations of the Empire. Any discussion of the rights enjoyed to-day by Christians in Turkey would be unfair which did not make just acknowledgment of the great improvements produced under the Hatti-Humayoun. The organization of the country under the vilayet system, with Administrative Councils composed of Moslems and non-Muslims; the codes of civil and criminal law; the organization of the judiciary, with non-Moslems by the side of Moslems on the bench; the improved condition of the police and the gendarmerie; and the erection of Municipal Governments for cities and towns, are all fruits of this Charter, whose value is perhaps too often under-estimated.

Fuad Pasha's Circular, May 15, 1867. (Législation Ottomane, vol. 2, p. 24.)

Improvement of condition of Christians.

Yet there are portions of the wide field covered by the Hatti-Humayoun which cannot be contemplated with satisfaction by any well-wisher of the Turkish Empire. The object of this paper is to point out some deviations in practice from the requirements of this document which have become prominent since about the year 1880. In speaking of these matters we do so without a right to speak for the Christians of Turkey in general, with the consciousness that some classes of these Christians might consider us as meddlers for venturing to speak at all, and with the sole purpose of pointing out directions in which we think that the full execution of the Hatti-Humayoun, as explained by Turkish statesmen of the last generation, might do much, if not undertaken too late, to calm existing discontent throughout the country.

Object of this paper.

No claim to speak for all the Christians of Turkey.

If in any part of this paper our illustrative facts are drawn from the experiences of Protestants in Turkey, this is due to our closer knowledge of our own co-religionists. Far be it from us to imply that Protestants have special claims for attention not belonging to all Christians of the Empire. At the same time we believe that after deduction of accidents due to the comparative smallness of the Protestant body in Turkey, our remarks will apply in general to the condition of all Christians in the Empire, and particularly in its Asiatic provinces.

No desire to urge special attention to Protestants.

(A.)—*Civil Disabilities, due to Religious Belief.*

Since 1880 we have observed a tendency to disregard several provisions of the Hatti-Humayoun which were designed in a general way to prevent religious belief from bringing civil inequality or disability upon the followers of any creed.

1. In Fuad Pasha's Circular above referred to, he pointed out in 1867 that "the principle of the admissibility of subjects of the Sultan without distinction of religion to all public employments . . . . has been put in practice." But since the year 1881, when Christians in high administrative office were dismissed from several Asiatic provinces, a tendency has been increasingly marked to displace Christians by Moslems in responsible posts in every Department of Government in Asiatic Turkey. At Constantinople, also, in that section of the Council of State to which the Administration of the Interior especially belongs, the whole membership with one exception is Mahommedan. Yet measures affecting vital interests of large Christian populations are there daily taken. This single Christian member of the interior section of the Council of State formerly occupied an important post in the Foreign Office, which is now filled by a Moslem.

Fuad Pasha on admission of all to public employment. (Circular, sect. 8.)

Christians dismissed from Government office.

Council of State.

Elias Effendi.

The High Council of the Ministry of Public Instruction, which is especially required by the Hatti-Humayoun to be a "mixed" Council, contains but one non-Mussulman member, although it controls the interests of all the Christian schools in the country. The superior Council of Censorship at the same Ministry has also an insignificant proportion of non-Mussulman members.

Hatti-Humayoun sect. xv (as numbered in Législation Ottomane)

Councils at Ministry of Public Instruction.

Although the greatest number of Christian books published in Turkey are brought out by Protestant publishing houses, and although the proportion of readers of books is far greater in the Protestant community than in any other, there is no Protestant member on this Council (nor, in fact, on any high Council, nor in any responsible Government office).

Mussulman removal of Christian books.

Yet it is this overwhelmingly Mussulman body which modifies or prohibits the religious books or the school books which the Christians of Turkey desire to use for their own people.

Hatti-Humayoun, sects. xii, xxxi, xxxiv.

This was not the case twenty years ago, and it is in direct opposition to the Hatti-Humayoun.

Fuad Pasha on abuses of the police tax-collectors (Circular, sect. 16).

In this connection another reform referred to with pride by Fuad Pasha as an important gain to the non-Mussulmans of Turkey under the Hatti-Humayoun, was the suppression of the ancient usage of uniting in the police agents the functions of tax-collectors with those of agents of the police. This confusion gave rise to very grave abuses. Little by little this usage has been restored, and complaints of abuse due to the practice have abounded since 1889. Finally, in the summer of 1894, an Imperial Decree set aside the work of the Hatti-Humayoun in this respect, by appointing the police throughout the country to be tax-collecting agents, with a system of rewards to officers who succeed best in collecting money.

Police reappointed to be tax-collectors in 1894.

Fuad Pasha (sect. 15 of Circular on torture).

Hatti-Humayoun, sects. xxi, xxii.

2. Another result claimed to have been secured by the Hatti-Humayoun is that "torture and corporal punishment, other than laid down in the Penal Code, are entirely unknown in Turkey."

Torture of witnesses. Angora, 1893. Yozghat, 1894.

Yet information which has come into our hands incidentally from many different sources respecting the preliminary investigations of the Angora trials of 1893, and the Yozghat trials of 1894, appear to make it impossible to deny that torture of the most inhuman character was extensively used in order to force men to testify according to the orders of the officials. One such attempt to obtain support to a statement prepared beforehand, but without the least foundation, was the subject of remonstrance by the United States' Legation to the Sublime Porte in 1893.

United States' Legation and torture at Marsovan, 1893.

Armenian blacksmith at Chermuk

In this case an Armenian at Marsovan was flogged until his back was raw flesh, in order to force him to sign a declaration that certain Americans were plotting with Armenian insurrectionists. Another such case which has just come to our notice is that of an Armenian blacksmith, of Chermuk, brought to a well-known physician residing in the Province of Angora. The man was in an idiotic condition, with numerous wounds upon his body, and a recently healed wound 5 inches in length upon his abdomen. He frequently cried out "it has burned to my soul." This man was brought to the doctor in hopes of medical aid to restore his reason which had but recently become deranged. His friends received advice, paid the fee, and went away, and it was only by diligent questioning that the physician extracted from them their story of the cause of the man's condition. In November 1894 he had been arrested on the testimony of a spy, and had been made insane by tortures inflicted upon him in prison in order to force him to confess the crime charged against him. The wound on his abdomen was self-inflicted; he having sought to disembowel himself at the end of two months of suffering. That there was no real evidence against this man may be deemed as proved by the fact that he was released by the authorities about the middle of January 1895.

Made insane by torture.

Fuad Pasha on insulting epithets to Christians (Circular, sect. 7).

Hatti-Humayoun, sects. viii and ix.

3. Another point of reform set forth by Fuad Pasha as accomplished under the Hatti-Humayoun was "the measure taken to prohibit the use of every injurious epithet drawn from differences of race and religion." But the ground gained in this respect under the Hatti-Humayoun has been more than lost during the past five years. Throughout Asiatic Turkey both officers of Government and private individuals among Mahommedans abuse Christians continually by calling them "misbelievers" ("Giaours") and by remarks concerning their religion, which, if used by Christians concerning Islamism, would bring instant and severe punishment on the offender.

The President of the Court at Yozghat, 1894.

Among prominent instances of this abuse may be mentioned the action of the President of the Court held for the trial of Armenians at Yozghat in the summer of 1894, who, we are credibly informed, grossly and habitually abused in this way Christians who were brought before him.

Saad-ed-din-Pasha, of Nicomedia, 1894, and Ex. Mouinjian.

Also we may mention the action of the present Military Commander at Nicomedia (Ismid) Saad-ed-din Pasha. On the 30th December, 1894, he ordered a leading Christian merchant of that city to open his shop for business on Sunday. On receiving answer that he would not open his shop because his religion required him to refrain from trade on Sunday, the Pasha publicly and abominably reviled a religion which teaches men such

things. He then struck the merchant in the face and tried by fierce threats to compel him "to obey the order of an officer of the Sultan."

Soldiers at Passin, 1894.

At a village of Passin, in the Province of Erzeroum, during the summer of 1894, some soldiers demanded from the people of the village on a Sunday sacks in which to carry away grain. It happened that they came while the people were attending Divine service in the Protestant Church. They were requested to wait until the close of service, when the sacks would be furnished. But they began to curse the religion of these people and entered the church, bawling out to the pastor to stop the service and to come and collect the sacks at once. They even drew their swords upon the men near the door who sought to quiet this interruption of the prayers.

Police at Marsovan.

In February 1893, also, an officer of the Protestant community at Marsovan (Province of Sivas) had occasion to go to the police head-quarters for a document. While he was there a police officer came to him, and, without provocation, poured forth a torrent of unspeakably vile abuse of him and of the most sacred things of his religion.

Of sixteen officers and privates of the police force who were present, not one made remonstrance against the outrage, which the victim was forced to endure in silence because of the knowledge that its object was to provoke him to some act which might serve as ground of a charge of "resisting an officer while on duty."

Twenty years ago either of these cases would have been punished as a violation of the rights conferred by the Hatti-Humayoun; but in the latter case, when the question was raised of making complaint against the police officer, a leading Protestant, in intimate relations with Government officials, declared that the practice of reviling the Christian religion is so universal and so constant in official circles, that it was useless to complain of it.

Hatti-Humayoun, sect. i.

4. Another point specially covered by the Hatti-Humayoun is security of property to Christians.

Fuad Pasha's Circular, sect. 1.

Before 1856, to quote the words of Fuad Pasha, "the liberty, the honour, and the property of Christians were exposed to the dangerous abuses of a traditional social organization, in which even the execution of the laws was subordinated to the sovereign will of the civil and ecclesiastical depositories of authority." After that Charter progress was made in repressing robbery and outrage in the eastern provinces of the Empire.

Harrying of Armenians.

But since 1890 there has been a distinct change. "Harrying" is the only word which properly expresses the treatment of the Armenian Christian peasants since 1890 in the districts of Moush and Bitlis, in the Province of Bitlis; of Khnous, Boulanyk, and Passin, in the Province of Erzeroum (in less degree); of the District of Yozgat, in the Province of Angora; and of the Nestorian Christians in the District of Jezire, in the Province of Mesul, and of Hekkiari, in the Province of Van. The "sovereign will" of the smaller Government officials has been to the people only less ruinous than the open rapine of the Kurds.

Bitlis. Erzeroum. Yozgat. Of Nestorian Christians. (Jezire is in Diarbekir.)

Hamidieh cavalry.

In 1892 the Kurds of the eastern provinces were given a quasi-military character by being enrolled as the auxiliary cavalry of the army. But they were left without control, being officered by their own Chiefs, while at the same time, since they were clothed with a species of official character, it became a crime against the State to resist their attacks. Numbers of Petitions imploring the intervention of the Sultan in protection of the people of that region were sent to Constantinople.

Petitions suppressed, 1893.

But in 1893 orders were sent from this city forbidding the transmission of any more Petitions against the Hamidieh regiments. The people thus harassed fled from the country in large numbers, and the famine which smote the Provinces of Erzeroum and Bitlis in 1893-94 appears to have been largely due to the depredations of the Kurds upon the peasantry.

Famine of 1893-94.

Passin, Province of Erzeroum.

In the autumn of 1894, a Notice published at Constantinople by the Government announced the settlement of 3,000 Kurds and Circassian immigrants in the "vacant" villages of the District of Passin. The same process of handing over to Moslems the houses and lands of Christians who have been killed or driven off in this way was taking place in December 1894 in the District of Baskala, in the Province of Van.

Baskala, Province of Van.

No attempt to punish aggression.

The toleration of these outrages is simply a restoration of the régime which existed before the issue of the Hatti-Humayoun; for we have yet to learn of any extended or serious attempts by Government to punish aggression upon the lives and property of Christians in these important provinces. Had the plan been officially adopted to wage in direct war upon these Christians, crushing them, reducing them to poverty, and clearing them off from the ground in order to replace them by a Mahommedan population, the means could not have been more effectually chosen nor the object more steadily pursued.

(B.)—*Specific Provisions for Religious Liberty.*

Religious liberty. Hatti-Humayoun, sects. xi. xii.

6. In respect to the public exercise of the rites of religion by Christians, the Hatti-Humayoun made important changes, putting Christians on a level with Mahommedans in recognized liberty to worship.

Before 1856 Christians had been allowed, by favour only, to worship in places other than churches set apart by Imperial Firman. It will be remembered that the right for Europeans "to read the Testament" in their abodes was once deemed a matter for stipulation in Treaties. By the Hatti-Humayoun, while the construction of churches was expressly reserved as a favour to be conferred by the Sovereign, liberty of public worship was assured to all, as a right.

Fuad Pasha (Circular, sects. 5 and 6).

Fuad Pasha points to this perfect liberty of worship with just satisfaction. This liberty continued to be enjoyed by Christians throughout the country during the thirty-five years from 1856-1891.

Question of the right of worship in private houses.

See "Appeal" (inclosed), p. 10.

In 1891 the Sublime Porte questioned for the first time officially the right of Christians to meet for worship in their private houses.

Answer to United States' Legation, February 1892.

Permits by local authorities.

In January 1892, an Imperial Edict was issued which confuses the case of worship, regulating which there is no law, with the case of schools, the regulation of which, by law, is reserved in the Hatti-Humayoun. It decrees the suppression of worship, and schools not formally authorized, and found to be, after a certain stipulated delay, without formal permits. On objection to this Decree the answer was made by the Sublime Porte that the measure was a technical bringing under regular forms, of existing places of worship, and that permits would be issued promptly on application. In fact, permits by the local authorities were issued in response to the larger part of such applications for authorization to continue worship in private houses. But in 1894, the question having come up again through the suppression of Protestant worship in some places in Asiatic Turkey, the Sublime Porte declared that the Edict in question applied to the holding of worship, the rules which have always been applied to the construction of churches, namely, the rule which requires specific authorization by Imperial Firman.

Verbal note to Her Majesty's Embassy, September 17, 1894.

Former régime restored.

Thus the Sublime Porte has formally announced its return to the régime in vogue before the Hatti-Humayoun was issued.

Explanation given by Governor of Derek (Sivas).

As a Turkish provincial official explained the position of the Government: "Every place where a Christian prays is reckoned to be a church, and a church cannot exist without Imperial Firman."

Prohibition of Protestant worship.

At this moment, congregations of from 150 to 300 Protestants are prohibited from worship in the places recognized as their meeting-houses during from ten to twenty years at Eatza, in the Province of Trebizond, Quetzig, and Agn, in the province of Kharput, Kir Shehir, in the Province of Angora, to say nothing of the congregations at Sidon and Gedih Pasha in Constantinople, whose pressing Petitions for Imperial Firmans have been disregarded by the Government during many years.

Education. Hatti-Humayoun, sect. xv.

6. The Hatti-Humayoun declares in regard to the schools of Christians that the various communities are authorized to open schools. Any one reading this Article in the original Turkish will see at a glance that it does not contemplate the submission to the authorities of the expediency or the right to open schools. Fuad Pasha, in his Circular, says: "In regard to schools erected and directed by the communities, the most absolute liberty is left to them by the Imperial Government, which never intervenes, save to prevent, in case of necessity, the confiding of the direction of these schools to persons whose principles are notoriously hostile to the authority of the Imperial Government, or contrary to public order."

Fuad Pasha's Circular, sect. 10.

This liberty was fully enjoyed by the various Christian communities during the twenty-eight years from 1856-1884.

Beginning of suppression of schools.

But in Syria, in 1882, and generally in 1884, the Government suddenly commenced to suppress Christian schools, on the ground of "lack of conformity to the School Law of 1869." On examination it was found that in the centre of this Law, preceded and followed by matter relating solely to the Governmental system of schools, there was a single paragraph touching schools not under Government patronage. This paragraph says that permits for "private" schools are granted on submission of the course of study, of the books used, and of the diplomas of teachers, to the approval of the local authorities.

129th paragraph of School Law of 1869.

This paragraph had been held in abeyance during thirteen years, and was utterly unknown to Christians until some thirty Christian schools were closed in Syria in 1882, for disobedience to it.

Mazif Pasha's note to United States' Legation in 1886.

On the general application of this paragraph to Christian schools in 1884, negotiations took place which led, in 1886, to a Declaration by the Minister of Public Instruction that existing Christian schools will not be molested on submission to control in the three points mentioned. Schools throughout the country submitted to the Regulation. But the authorities uniformly said that they had no orders to give permits to any but new schools.

Kiamil Pasha's Circular of 1889.

Three years later some schools, although recognized in this way, were closed for lack of permits. Fresh negotiations followed, and the Declaration of the Ministry of Public Instruction was confirmed by a Vizirial Order in 1889.

Edict of January 1892

Nevertheless, in January 1892, the Edict above referred to was issued, which ordered the closing of all schools and places used for worship that had not obtained formal permits within a specified time; it being left to the local officials to issue or refuse the permits requested. The permits were granted by the local authorities in the majority of cases. But in 1893 it began to be claimed that the permits required are Firmans, and not those issued by the Department of Public Instruction; and in September 1894, this claim was officially asserted in the note alluded to in the last section.

Demand for Firmans.

Verbal note of Sublime Porte to Her Majesty's Embassy, September 17, 1894.

Meanwhile, a series of stringent orders have been issued from the Sublime Porte, laying heavy penalties upon officials who neglect to close schools that are without permits, commanding teachers to refrain from having addresses made to their scholars at school festivals, or from having essays read by their scholars unless the address and essays were first submitted to the approval of the authorities, directing that repairs of private houses occupied by authorized Christian schools be prevented unless made by order from Constantinople, and requiring the prohibition of the purchase of houses or building lots by English, American, and French subjects (the most part of foreign schools in Turkey belong to these three nationalities), unless in each case a bond is obtained from the purchaser promising that the buildings shall be razed to the ground, should worship or schools at any time be established in them.

1893.

1892.

Discrimination against land-owners wishing to open schools.

Officials consider Government hostile to Christian schools.

1894.

By such means the provincial officials have been filled with the idea that the Ottoman Government is hostile to Christian education institutions. This idea they are not slow to exhibit in their words and acts. For instance, an Imperial Decree has recently required all Christian schools to give serious instruction in the Turkish language.

Arabic village schools to be closed.

Immediately the provincial authorities at Damascus notified their village Christians that their schools will be closed if they do not at once provide instruction in the Turkish language.

But Turkish is not known at all in that Arabic-speaking region, and it is beyond the ability of village communities to import and maintain teachers from distant provinces.

Bitlis schools forbidden to teach sciences.

In the Province of Bitlis, upon the issue of this Decree, the schools of the Armenians were instantly prohibited from teaching science of any kind, except in the Turkish language; and the schools were actually forced to cease giving lessons, except in reading and writing, because neither teachers nor scholars know Turkish.

The Regulations of the Mekteb Milkie reorganization.

Graduates of Christian schools refused public employment.

One further instance of restrictions placed upon Christian schools is found in a Law issued in 1892, organising an Imperial Civil Service School. In this Law, quite incidentally as it were, occurs a single phrase by which Government Bureaux are prohibited from giving employment to persons who are graduates of other than Government schools. Leaving out of the question the fact that this Law hampers by a new condition that admissibility of Christians to Government service which is guaranteed by the Hatti-Humayoun, we point solely to its effect upon the five higher educational institutions of the Christians. There are none in the country, except Christian schools, of a grade similar to the higher Government schools. Young men who wish to enter the Government service are by this Law notified that they must not patronize the Christian colleges to which they would naturally look for an education.

So far as this Law has effect to deter young men from attending these colleges, it is an attack upon the very existence of the higher Christian educational institutions.

Administrative measures restricting culture.

8. This review of the attitude of the Ottoman Government towards its obligations under the Hatti-Humayoun would be incomplete, and even in some degree unintelligible, without notice of recent administrative measures affecting the whole vast subject of religious, moral, and intellectual culture among the Christian subjects of the Sultan.

Censorship of the press.

The censorship of the press and of books introduced from abroad nominally and legitimately relates to the suppression of what is politically and morally bad. But an extension has recently been given to this admitted principle, making the censorship embrace the essentials of all culture among Christians.

Press Law of January 1895

Three different Laws regulating the publication and sale of books in Turkey have been issued in twenty years, each one more stringent than the preceding one. This last Law issued gives a list of prohibited subjects so broad that under it officials may exclude, if they desire, all Christian literature. It requires censors to reject a book if they

find in it a single sentence which appears to them doubtful, and it lays severe penalties upon the importation, sale, distribution, or even the transportation of any book which has not received the approval of the censors.

When it is added that the censor who examines books imported from abroad rarely dares to commit himself by certifying in writing that he has approved any book, the possibilities of this law become apparent.

The case has happened again and again during 1893 and 1894 when Christians have been severely punished for being in possession of technically "unauthorized" books. In one case a man was punished for 1893 for owning a Bible published before the time when the special authorization was required to be printed on the title-page. It was technically an "unauthorized" book, although shown to be identical with the "authorized" Bible.

Destruction of Bible in the district of March, 1893.

Books taken from travellers.

It has become a usual occurrence for travellers to be stripped of books at any guard station in the interior of Turkey. The fact of authorization printed on the title-page makes no difference; the book must be sent to the head-quarters of the province, perhaps 100 miles away, for examination. The owner of the book is happy if he is not detained under arrest until the result of the arrest is made known. Of course, he abandons his book rather than wait several days for the examination to be made. In fact, the suspicion exhibited towards Christians who possess books, the frequency with which their books are seized for reexamination, the often garbled reports of their contents made by ignorant or designing examiners, the difficulty of recovering a book once detained for examination, and the impossibility of redress when a provincial censor differs in opinion from the Department at Constantinople, and orders the confiscation of authorized works, have at last made the Christians of Asiatic Turkey almost as terrified at sight of a book as are the officials who are set over them. So complete is the destruction of books in some districts through these reasons that we are informed that Christian children now growing up in those districts bid fair to be as ignorant as were their grandfathers.

Destruction of owners of books.

Books.

Book trade reduced.

16. The same causes operate to destroy the book trade. Moreover, the authorities often arrest and violently rebuke sellers of authorized books, as if their business were unlawful. To avoid increasing beyond measure the bulk of this paper, reference is made for examples of such unlawful interferences with the book trade to the printed Appeal hereto appended. This Appeal was issued in 1891 by the representatives of six British and American Bible and Missionary Societies convened at Constantinople. To bring the list there found down to date in illustration of the statements of this and the preceding section of this paper would make a paper of formidable proportions.

"Appeal" of 1891, p. 4 (appended).

Censorship of publications in process of publication.

11. For light upon the principle which underlies much of this hostility to the circulation of Christian books among Christians, we may turn to the incidents of the censorship, as exercised upon works imported from abroad or in process of publication within the Empire.

The censorship of the press in Constantinople is divided into two sections, that of the newspaper press, which depends directly upon the Ministry of the Interior, and that of the book press, which is under a Chief Council of Censorship at the Ministry of Public Instruction. This Council again is, according to the new Press Law, under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. The superior censors of Christian bookstore all Moslems; the subordinate readers hitherto have been Christians, but latterly Mahommedans have been assigned to this work also, to revise the recommendations of the Christian readers. Only the censorship applied to religious and educational writings of Christians relates to the purpose of this paper.

Censorship of foreign books.

The censorship of foreign religious and literary works is so stringent as to deprive the Christians residing in Asiatic Turkey of the ordinary means of keeping in touch with the advancement of knowledge among his coreligionists abroad. Among the classics of English literature, Shakespeare, Byron, Milton, Scott are prohibited works. In general, the same is true of pure literature in any language. No standard history, no encyclopedia, no high-class commentary on the Holy Scriptures, no treatise on metaphysics of any extended character can pass the censorship for admission into the interior of Turkey; and if any minister or teacher, anxious to fill well his place, ventures to smuggle books through, so as to form the rudiments of a library, he is liable to condemnation for the crime which the authorities may deem to be "united" by the contents of the history or the theological work concerned. The effect of this refusal to admit the standard books of Christendom, in holding the teachers of Christian schools in Turkey down upon the primary school level, need not be enlarged upon.

Books of reference.

12. The censorship of books published within the Empire is still more rigorous, confining itself in no way to politics or to polemics in religion, but laying hold even upon books designed for the religious instruction and devotional use of Christians. The statements made on this point are at first hand from members of our own Committee,

whose literary work brings them into intimate daily contact with the censors both of newspapers and of books.

Censorship on Mahommedan books that Moslems cannot read.

It is conceivable that Mahommedan censors might defend their right to prohibit, as they do, the publication in Turkish, which Mahommedans can read, of the noble thoughts which have been the inspiration and comfort of Christians in all ages. But it is not conceivable that justification can be claimed for interference in the case of the publication of purely religious works, not in the Arabic letters used by Mahommedans, but in the Christian letters, which no Moslem can read. Yet the Christian writing for his fellow-Christians in his own religious newspapers may not use quotations of Holy Scripture. These are forbidden most commonly because they contain single words whose use in any context is forbidden, and which, being in the Bible text, may not be altered by the publisher. For instance, a text which speaks of the Resurrection may not be quoted because the verb "kiyam et mek" (to rise) is forbidden in any context. Any of the following words will lead to the prohibition of the text of Scripture which contains them: persecution, strength, courage, union, equality, rights, liberty, star (in astronomy one has to use "luminary" instead of "star"), hero, bloodshed, King, palace, arms, &c. In political writings these words may sometimes be used by newspaper editors, but in religious articles they are forbidden in any context whatever. A Christian religious newspaper may not place any hymn or other poetry before its readers. From the hymn books used in religious worship many of the grand old hymns of the Church have been expunged, and the suppression sustained after appeal to the highest authority at the Porte. Many Greeks and Armenians of Asiatic Turkey know no language but the Turkish, which they write by use of their own respective alphabets. Christian writers addressing such readers, and using Turkish written with one of these alphabets, are constantly forbidden to use words of purely religious signification which are the words used in the Bible, and the only words known to the people for expressing a given idea, because the censor decides that the idea belongs to Mahommedanism alone. Of such words examples are the word for "the guiding grace of God," prohibited because Mahommedans cannot admit that Christians can have this grace; the word used in the Bible for the Gospel of Jesus Christ prohibited because it means "good news," as "Gospel" does, and because Mahommedans do not admit that the Gospel is entitled to this name. The word used in the Bible for "Apostle" is used in Turkish law every day in the sense of "messenger," but its use is prohibited in Christians' religious newspapers because it implies that the Apostles of Jesus Christ were sent of God, which Moslems deny. The same prohibition for reasons of Mahommedan religious prejudice lies against the use by Christian religious writers of references, even in works which no Moslem can read, to our Saviour as the Saviour of the World, or as shedding his blood for the cleansing from sin.

Exclusion of hymns.

Religious ideas which are forbidden.

Prohibitions of subjects of religious discourse.

But aside from these interferences, the censors refuse to allow certain subjects of religious discourse to be presented to Christians. The virtues of meekness, of moral courage, of resignation under affliction, of hope in God under adversity, are all subjects concerning which Christian religious books may not speak to Christians. The same is true of exhortations to benevolence, practical instruction to Christians as to methods of copying Jesus Christ in doing good to others, suggestions of the duty of evangelistic effort among the degraded masses, and of discussions of Christians' missions and their diverse undertakings in other lands.

Restrictions on preaching.

Yozghat.

13. Besides all this, Protestant Ministers are often molested when they preach upon such ordinary themes of their religion. The Protestant preacher from Yozghat was expelled from the place in 1891 for no other reason. He was not charged with sedition, and was released on arrival at Constantinople, not told not to return to his charge.

Sungurlu.

Gemerek.

The Protestant preacher at Sungurlu was compelled to leave that town for preaching on the Resurrection from the Dead. The Protestant preacher from Gemerek is undergoing imprisonment in the fortress of St. Jean d'Acre, condemned for sedition, but, so far as the evidence produced at his trial shows, his preaching was arrested to this end.

Chermuk.

The Protestant preacher at Chermuk, near Cesarea, has just been imprisoned, and foreigners who know intimately his law-abiding and sterling character are assured that his efforts to lead his flock into closer adherence to Bible Christianity is his only crime.

Misunderstanding of Christian teachings.

Protestant ministers all over the land declare that they are compelled, in choosing their texts and in framing their discourses, to weigh their words, to hesitate and paraphrase, through fear that if they speak of the consolations of Christianity they will be charged with encouraging discontent. If they speak of the duty of resistance to sin, they may be condemned for suggesting resistance to the Turkish Government, and if they urge men to strive to reach a pure and noble character, that they may be charged with inciting men to unlawful aspirations. These misunderstandings of Christian instruction here recited, have

all been made and professed to be sincerely made, by Mahommedan critics of Christian teaching. On making indignant complaint of such patent perversions of the meaning of the teaching, one of our friends was informed by a high official in Constantinople that "while provincial authorities are constantly sending to the capital extracts from the Bible to prove the necessity of suppressing that book in all languages, Christians should be grateful for being allowed to have their Bible, instead of complaining because they are restricted in making or prohibiting comments upon it."

14. It is often said that the restrictions upon the rights of individuals in Turkey are not peculiar to non-Mahommedan subjects of the Sultan, and that these restrictions are unfairly made a cause of special complaint. But this is a superficial view of the case. Many of the deviations from the Hatti-Humayoun appear to be of general application, because Christians are not specifically named in Decrees by which innovations are introduced.

Innovations chiefly Christians chiefly

The innovating measures name the less burden Christians alone or chiefly, being directed against rights which Mahommedans do not value, or which they do not need to have because the laws of the country are framed from the Mahommedan standpoint. Moreover, in every case where religious prejudice has room for play at all Mahommedan officials are rarely able to avoid giving some advantage over Christians to Mahommedans, even when they are acting in an arbitrary manner. An illustration of this latter point will suffice. In 1886 a book called the "Mudafaa," and in 1892 another called the "Resalei Hamidieh" was published in Constantinople. Both of these books were full of the most scurrilous abuse of Christianity and of the most contemptuous epithets applied to the professors of that religion. The authors of those works were decorated, and many efforts were made to give their books the widest possible circulation.

Tendency to favour Mahommedans even when acting arbitrarily.

Printed attacks on Christians. Examples of this

Since that time, especially in 1892 and 1893 the Turkish newspapers of Constantinople have contained article after article pouring opprobium upon the Christian religion. These articles have been published with the approval of a censorship that by law must decide beforehand whether any given article may be published. But at the same time Christians have been rigorously prohibited from making in Turkish any answer to false statements concerning Christianity by which these writers sought to excite the contempt and hatred of the Mahommedan population towards Christians. It is the religious prejudice rather than the violation of law which strikes the close observer of these matters.

Christians not allowed to reply

Hatti-Humayoun an unconditional guarantee

At all events the Hatti-Humayoun was accepted at the Congress of Paris in 1856, as providing reasonably for the quieting of the Christian population of Turkey, because it guaranteed to non-Mahommedans certain specific rights. The execution of this guarantee was not conditional. The rights guaranteed to non-Mahommedans might or might not be such as Mahommedans would desire or value, but they were clearly such as are essential to Christians, and such that the denial of them always must cause ferment and unrest.

Turkey not absolved from fulfilment by ill-treating Mahommedans

This being the case, the restriction of these rights cannot be condoned any more than their non-existence (when the Charter was framed) could be excused by proof that Turkey has also denied these rights to its Mahommedan subjects.

15. To review the whole case of worship and education, we find an increasing stringency in Turkey directed against Christian education, an increasing tendency to hinder Christian worship, an increasing hostility to the use of books by Christians in Turkey, which actually cripples the intellectual powers of men who would carry their culture along with the best thoughts of Christendom. We find an increasing vigilance to prevent Christians from exercising the injunctions of their religion in practical benevolence among their own people.

In these later years we find these tendencies reaching a climax of intensity in the rough hands laid upon the exposition of Christian faith in a way to prevent Christians from learning the full value of their religion, and to prevent that religion from producing its full fruit among its followers.

The view of the Ottoman official that Christianity the ideal of men to be

In answer to inquiries as to the meaning of this rapid trend of different lines of policy all converging to a single point, we are told by high authority that the whole trouble is that Christian teaching tends to make men manly. This answer is given with unanimity by Turkish officials, though in different forms of paraphrase, from Constantinople to Bagdad. This answer is given to questions about closed schools, about hindered worship, about mutilated books.

To this we make answer that the deliberate purpose of the Founder of Christianity and of the religion which He taught, is to take the degraded and ignorant and to make them men, self-controlled, honest, and useful. We make answer that the purpose to

elevate the character and the powers of men is not a disloyal or a seditious purpose. And we make answer that any far-reaching scheme to restrain Christianity from accomplishing its full fruit in purifying and quickening the lives of its followers, is a war upon the Christian religion itself.

To attempt to thwart this result is to war against that religion.

In preparing this paper we have already exceeded the limits contemplated by the request for facts which led to its composition. But we must still add that we are actuated by no spirit of hostility to the Ottoman Government. We are actuated rather by the belief that in inviting the attention [*sic*] trend of a portion of recent Turkish policy, we are rendering the truest service to the Ottoman Empire. We would not belittle the exigencies of a time when there is treason abroad, perhaps to a degree of which the evidence may escape the eye of even the most practised of disinterested observers. It has been our wish to introduce facts into this discussion which grow legitimately out of present political disturbances in Turkey. Our confidence of success in avoiding facts that have no connection with the subjects under discussion is fortified by a mature conviction that the importance of really seditious movements so far present among Christian populations of Asiatic Turkey has been enormously exaggerated. This unhappy exaggeration, so far as it is honest, has arisen from the inability of Mahommedan officials to distinguish between, on the one hand the legitimate aspirations of loyal Christians for a better manhood which it is the real interest of Turkey to encourage, and, on the other hand, the seditious schemings of a comparatively few hot-heads, which it is the right and duty of the officers of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan to suppress. Whatever the reasons that have led to the annulment and disregard of so important sections of the Hatti-Humayoun, the reasons of interest to the Ottoman State exist to-day for their enforcement which existed at the close of the Crimean war; and it is a return to the letter of that document which we would urge with all the force in our power.

Inclosure 3 in No. 227.

Appeal on behalf of Religious Work in the Turkish Empire, from representatives of Bible and Missionary Societies at Constantinople.

A TENDENCY is plainly evident in some Turkish official circles to restrict or even to deny the privileges hitherto gratefully enjoyed by missionaries in the Turkish Empire. Recent orders, apparently intended merely to secure a legitimate supervision of the sale of books, place it in the power of subordinate officials in the provinces to treat books circulated by the Bible and Missionary Societies as though they had not received official authorization to be published. Notwithstanding that each copy bears on its title-page the number and date of the permit for its publication, officials in the provinces have detained, mutilated, or confiscated these books, and arrested their sale in many vexatious ways. A Project of Law now under consideration at the Sublime Porte, of which a copy is given below, would legalize many of the restrictions from which the Societies have suffered, and so threatens to break up the important business conducted for years by the Bible and Missionary Societies, of selling these authorized books in all parts of Turkey.

Of equally grave import is an Edict issued during the year 1891, of which a copy is given later on, which requires missionaries to refrain from "transforming" dwelling-houses "into churches or schools," except by authority of an Imperial Firman. This Edict may be intended merely for the prevention of the unlawful transfer of dwellings into the category of permanent churches and schools, which by law are freed from taxation. But it is so worded as to be officially interpreted in the sense that missionaries may not hold worship or conduct school in their houses unless those houses have been permanently set apart for the purpose by Imperial Firman. In this connection, it should be borne in mind that Firmans fix the use of the property for all time, while long experience has shown that the difficulty of obtaining Firmans for churches and schools is such as to amount to a restriction often prohibitive.

Under the ancient Capitulations, the usage which has fixed their interpretation, and the Treaties consecrating the liberal declarations of religious liberty which have been made by the Sultans of Turkey, the right of missionaries to exercise their profession in the Empire cannot be called in question.

Usage also shows that their profession has been understood from the first to include the performance of their religious functions in Divine worship, in the instruction of the young, and in the care of the sick. The new Edict, as commonly understood by the officials severely charged to enforce it, is an innovation which places it in the power of the Turkish authorities to prohibit missionaries from exercising their vocation in Turkey.

It appears, under these circumstances, to be of great importance to the Bible and Missionary Societies that the Home Governments should instruct their Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey to intervene and remonstrate against Edicts, Laws, or Decrees which set aside or restrict the long-established rights of these Societies. The right of protection of both the persons and the establishments of missionaries in Turkey is clearly assigned to the Powers by the LXIInd Article of the Treaty of Berlin.

The points requiring special attention seem to be the following:—

1. The maintenance of the principle that the Bible and Missionary Societies are entitled under the laws of religious liberty to circulate their books in the Turkish Empire; and, further, that the official authorization granted for the publication of these books constitutes them lawful articles of commerce, special restrictions upon the sales of which are in violation of the Treaties.

2. The maintenance of the principle that missionaries in Turkey cannot now be deprived of their immemorial right to exercise in the houses which they own or control, the functions, including the education of the young and the care of the sick, which have been understood and admitted *ab antiquo* by the Ottoman Government as belonging to the profession of those set apart for the religious life.

The necessity as well as the propriety for action in this direction will appear from the following details. For convenience, they are grouped under two heads: "The Restrictions of Religious Work," and "The Rights of Missionaries in Turkey."

I. *The Restrictions of Religious Work.*

(A.)—*Restrictions on the Circulation of Books.*

1. In November 1890 two boxes of books destined to the city of Bitlis were detained "for examination" by the authorities at Erzeroum while in transit through that city. They were released, in part, six months later. The books were chiefly Sunday-school lesson books for Bible study, published at the expense of the Religious Tract Society, London, by the American Mission. They were all officially authorized, and the boxes containing them were sealed with the leaden seal of the Constantinople Custom-house to indicate that examination had been made.

2. In 1890 and 1891 the authorities at Erzeroum confiscated about 500 volumes of officially authorized books, consisting chiefly of the Church Hymnal and the Bible Dictionary, in Armenian.

3. In December 1889 a travelling salesman of Bibles and other authorized books, issued by the American press at Beyrout, was arrested at Dere Zor, in Mesopotamia. Seventy-nine copies of the Bible or its parts, and 179 volumes of other authorized books, were confiscated and publicly burned as "injurious."

4. On the 22nd January, 1890, six copies of the Bible Dictionary, and fifty-four copies of the Church Hymnal in Armenian, were seized at the Custom-house at Gahta "for examination," although officially authorized for publication. On the 7th February, in the same year, fifty copies of the Church Hymnal were taken from boxes passing through this Custom-house *en route* to Tehran, Persia, a place over shipments to which the Turkish Government has no jurisdiction. On the 18th and 25th March in the same year, the same officials seized 140 Scriptures, or parts of Scriptures, 15 Bible dictionaries, and 255 copies of the Hymnal from boxes destined to different points in Asiatic Turkey. All of these books, although admittedly authorized for publication, were retained "for examination" more than eighteen months.

5. In March 1889 a colporteur selling Bibles in the Province of Angora was arrested, his books seized, and with himself sent to the capital of the province, where he was compelled to wait until orders to release these authorized books could be obtained from Constantinople.

6. In April 1889 a colporteur selling Bibles and other authorized books in the Province of Aleppo was arrested, and his books seized, he obtaining release only through Consular interference to demand respect for the authorization of the books.

7. In July 1889 a colporteur selling Bibles and other authorized books in the town of Alacham, district of Janik, was compelled by the authorities to discontinue his sales.

8. In October 1889 the authorities at Erzeroum seized a quantity of Bibles while in transit to the Bible Society's depots in the interior of the country, and retained them, notwithstanding the official authorization.

9. In October 1889 the authorities at Salonica obliged a colporteur to surrender his officially-authorized books in order that the provincial censor might review the judgment of his superiors on their innocuousness. The books, having been released after a week's detention, were offered for sale, upon which the colporteur was again arrested, and his books once more seized. They were not returned to him for several days.

10. In February 1890 a colporteur was arrested in the Province of Sivas, and his authorized books were seized. Having been at last released, three weeks later he was again arrested in a neighbouring district, of which the authorities preferred not to recognize the official authorization of the books, nor the second authorization of the censor of the first district. He was sent three days' journey under guard, as if guilty of selling "injurious" books, and was finally released on bail.

11. In March 1890 two colporteurs were arrested in the Province of Salonica, and their books seized, although authorized for publication, on the pretence that the provincial authorities alone are competent to authorize books for sale in the province.

12. In July 1890 the book depôt of the Bible and Missionary Societies in Marash was closed, and a large number of authorized books were seized by the authorities. At the same time the travelling agent of the American Bible Society was arrested, and his books seized. He was released only on promising not to take the journey to sell Bibles, which he had contemplated.

13. In November 1890 a Bible Society colporteur in the Province of Broosa was arrested and detained three weeks on pretence that his licence was not sufficient; a pretence which was finally set aside by the Sublime Porte.

14. In the same month another colporteur was arrested and imprisoned at a town in the Province of Adrianople, although his books were all published under official authorization. Having been sent as a culprit under guard to Adrianople, he was there released.

15. In 1890 and 1891 the authorities at Salonica mutilated, by tearing out leaves, the Bible dictionary in Bulgarian, authorized by the Ministry of Public Instruction.

16. In February 1891 the authorities of Monastir refused to allow the circulation of authorized books except as the provincial censor might see fit to permit.

17. In 1890 and 1891 the authorities of Monastir notified the colporteurs of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society that they may sell books in places named in advance only. A list of places having been made out, where the colporteurs expected to sell books, the colporteurs were forbidden to visit several of these places.

18. In March 1891 the authorities at Alacham, district of Janik, forbade the sale of the Bible in that place, although authorized for publication, and arrested the bookseller, sending his books under guard to Samsoun. He himself was imprisoned as a criminal for some time. His books were detained for six months; some of these Bibles are still in custody, although others were released.

19. In June 1891 a Bible colporteur was arrested in the Province of Erzeroum and imprisoned twelve days "for selling injurious books." His Bibles, authorized for publication, were seized and held for six weeks.

20. In August 1891 a colporteur in the Province of Adrianople was deprived of his books, all being duly authorized, which were held "for examination" during several days.

21. In November 1891 another colporteur in the Province of Adrianople was deprived of his books which have not yet been restored to him. All were authorized for publication.

22. In November 1891 the authorities of Trebizond prohibited the colporteurs of the American Bible Society from selling Bibles in the villages of the province or in the streets of the city.

23. In November 1891 the authorities at Samsoun prohibited sales by colporteurs in that place and in the surrounding villages.

24. In November 1891 the authorities at Adana arrested the Superintendent of Sales of the American Bible Society while travelling to sell authorized books. At the same time, sixty-six Bibles were seized from the book shop in Adana.

25. In November 1891 a Bible colporteur was arrested, and his books seized at Geordes. He is still held on bail while the authorities are examining the Bibles to see if they are "injurious."

26. In September 1891 the authorities at Erzeroum seized from boxes in transit through that city, destined to Bitlis, 151 volumes of authorized books.

27. In December 1891 the authorities at Adana informed the American Bible Society's agent there that they will no longer recognize the authorization for publication as sufficient, but must decide for themselves what books are injurious.

28. In the course of 1891 the Ministry of Public Instruction at Constantinople has forbidden the publication of the Scriptures in the Albanian language, stopping this enterprise of the British and Foreign Bible Society, although the Bible has been authorized to be printed in all languages in Turkey.

29. In December 1891 the authorities of Erzeroum detained the Turkish Lexicon of Sir James Redhouse, published by the American Mission at Constantinople with the authorization of the Ministry of Public Instruction. After holding the book for two weeks they defaced it by blotting out with ink the Turkish word signifying Armenia.

30. In November 1891 the authorities at Dede Aghaj, near the Dardanelles, seized a Bible from the hands of a traveller, notwithstanding the record of official authorization. They sent the volume "for examination" to Adrianople, and gave the owner the choice between losing the book entirely, waiting a week or two for a verdict from the Governor-General, of going himself to Adrianople (100 miles distant), whence he had just come with the book. The practice of seizing books from the hands of travellers is of almost daily occurrence, in many places the owner of the book being held under bail until a judgment can be had from the capital of the province, whether the book is a fit one for him to read.

The frequency of these interferences with a lawful trade of more than sixty years' standing is sometimes explained by small officials, who declare their opinion that all Christian books are dangerous. The following translation of the Project of Law relating to the colportage of authorized books, which is now under consideration of the Sublime Porte, offers much ground for such an opinion. Article 3 makes the licence to sell books, unlike that for any other trade, obtainable only by Petition to the highest authority of the province. Moreover, it provides that a foreigner must give up his national rights before he can engage in such a trade. Article 6 makes it perilous for any one to offer books for sale on faith of the official authorization, for it permits officials to punish men for selling books which the officials deem injurious, without regard to the authorization. Article 9, by giving all officials the right to prohibit book sales in their districts without assigned reason, cannot but suggest to the official that there must be something about the use of books which is inherently dangerous.

The proposed Law offers to the Societies, which have invested large capital in the lawful business of publishing the books, ground for the strongest protests against such needless precautions to hamper the sales of works, of whose innocuous character the Government satisfies itself before authorization to publish.

31. Translation of the projected law on book colportage:—

"Article 1. Those who sell in the streets or other places books or tracts of any description, or pictures or photographs, or any printed or written papers, excepting newspapers, by carrying them or placing them on some means of conveyance, or by spreading them out on temporary exhibition, are called book-hawkers (colporteurs).

"Art. 2. Book-hawkers are required to obtain a licence in the capital from the Prefecture of the city, and in the provinces from the Municipality.

"Art. 3. In order to obtain a licence, those who wish to become book-hawkers are required to draw up a Petition containing name, title or profession, age, residence, nationality, and the names of the places where it is proposed to carry about (books), as well as the promise not to sell books, tracts, or other papers or pictures or photographs which are opposed to the public peace, to morals, or to the religious sects. To this is to be attached a testimonial from some honourable quarter as to the good repute of the applicant. This Petition is to be presented in Constantinople or its dependencies to the Prefect of the city, and in the provinces to the Governor-General of the vilayet; or, in those districts which are separately administered, to the Governor of the district. In case the petitioner is a foreigner, he is required to add to his Petition and his testimonial a bond certified by the Embassy of the Government of his allegiance, whereby he agrees to be treated as an Ottoman subject.

"Art. 4. Those who have not entirely fulfilled the conditions laid down in Article 3 will not be given licences for colportage.

"Art. 5. If colporteurs shall call out the books which they sell by any words, aside from the title, which suggest the contents of the books, their licences are to be given up, and they themselves are to be fined in accordance with Article 254 of the Penal Code.

"Art. 6. Book-hawkers who knowingly sell any kind of pernicious or immoral books, tracts, pictures, photographs, or other papers, either openly or secretly, are regarded as accessories in crime with the authors or printers, and besides suffering the treatment prescribed by law, they will be restrained from exercising their calling for from one to three months.

"Art. 7. The force of the licence is limited to the time specified in it, and if the books

and tracts relate to religious matters they are not to be sold in the vicinity of any place of worship.

"Art. 8. Those who sell books, tracts, pictures, photographs, or other papers printed or prepared without permission, or imported from abroad, and those who engage in book-hawking without obtaining an official licence, are fined from £T. 3 to £T. 10.

"Art. 9. It is in the hands of the Government to prevent the purchase and sale of books, tracts, and other papers, whose printing and publication rests on an official authorization, when their circulation in some places is thought to be harmful for the time being. Booksellers selling such books within the prohibited districts give up their licence, and are punished in conformity with Article 8.

"Art. 10. The term of validity of the licence and the course to be pursued in regard to its being limited to the owner, conforms to the system in vogue with regard to trade licences.

"Art. 11. Book-hawkers are subjected to the inspection of the officers of the Ministry of Public Instruction, of the Municipality, and of the police.

"Art. 12. The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Instruction to charged with the execution of this Law."

(B.)—*Restrictions on the Exercise of the Missionary Profession.*

1. The following is a translation of the essential parts of a note communicating to the Foreign Diplomatic Representatives in Constantinople the Decree in reference to the "transformation" of dwelling-houses into "churches or schools." The note is dated at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 17th August, 1891:—

"It occurs sometimes that missionaries or 'religieux' transform in an irregular manner into churches or schools, buildings which they construct or buy as private houses. In order to stop this abuse it has been decided that hereafter the buildings which have undergone such a transformation without authorization by Imperial Firman, will be restored to their primitive purpose. Instructions in this sense having been given to the competent authorities, the Minister of Foreign Affairs begs . . . . to be kind enough on its part to inform those who are concerned."

2. The following is a translation of an order sent early in 1891 by the Sublime Porte to the Governors of provinces upon this subject:—

"While it is prohibited to construct such establishments as churches and schools without superior authority, it has been the custom in many places to establish such institutions and afterwards to ask the Imperial Government to kindly grant permits for them, and this privilege has been put to a bad use. Since the prohibition is unquestioned, and the necessity for enforcing it is evident, by decision of the Council of State, approved by Decree of His Imperial Majesty, hereafter, any official who allows the making of churches and schools, and such like, without permission, will be brought to judgment."

Neither of these two documents show precisely what is the object aimed at.* The natural answer of a missionary to a charge of having illegally transformed his house into a church or school is that it has undergone no such transformation, and pays as a dwelling-house the taxes laid upon it. But the average provincial official, informed that he is to be brought to judgment if he allows an undefined *something* in regard to schools and churches, deems it safest to stop Divine worship and close schools held in buildings which have not an Imperial Firman. In this sense, it has been learned, the Decree is interpreted by many officials in Government Bureaux in Constantinople. Interpreted in this way, the Order implies the prohibition of any new missionary operations in Turkey, and perhaps even the closing of long-established undertakings, unless the missionary can induce the Sultan to protect him by a Firman.

3. The following are instances where this interpretation has been given to this Decree by provincial officials:—

(*a.*) The Governor-General of Van having closed an American Mission school at the village of Agantz, was directed to allow it to be reopened under the terms of the agreement by which American schools of long standing are not to be closed on the sole ground of a lack of a formal permit. On the appearance of the above Order the Governor-General promptly closed the school again, declaring the meaning of the Order to be that no Christian school in the smallest village can be carried on without special Imperial Firman.

(*b.*) In October 1891 the Governor-General of Adana notified the American missionaries in that province that all of their schools will be closed unless, within three months, they obtain an Imperial Firman authorizing the continuance of each one.

* See, however, postscript on p. 19.

(c.) About the same time the authorities in Antioch served a notice of similar tenour upon the missionaries of the Irish Presbyterian Church in that city.

(d.) In August of 1891 the Governor of Herek, in the Province of Sivas, closed and sealed up the Protestant chapel in that place, and forbade meeting for worship in any other room, saying, "Any and every place where Christians meet for prayer is a church, and must have an Imperial Firman before worship can be held."

(e.) An American missionary at Bourdour, in the Province of Iconium, bought a piece of land, and, obtaining the usual municipal permit, commenced to build himself a house. In October 1891, just as the roof was about to be tiled, the Governor of the district stopped the work, and refused to allow the roof to be completed unless the owner would sign a bond to the effect that Divine worship should not be statedly held in the building, nor a school opened there.

These examples suffice to show the danger threatening all missionary institutions in Turkey, if the interpretation of these officials is to become general. In many towns are temporary residents in small numbers who desire to meet for worship. In others the native Protestant community is too poor to build church or school-house. Whether missionaries would offer to [*sic*] such a place of meeting, or whether the people would meet for prayer in one of their own houses, according to the interpretation put upon this Decree, they may not meet anywhere unless they can devote property to the construction of a church, and have it set apart by Firman.

But if worship in places which have not a Firman is to be prohibited, perhaps it may be supposed that a Firman can be easily obtained. On the contrary, if a missionary applies for a Firman he is often denied it on the ground that there are none of his nation living in the place where he would build a church or school. If a small group of native Protestants ask if they are in a fair way to be told that being few in number they do not need a church or school. In the most favourable circumstances a Firman for a Christian church or school in Turkey cannot be expected to issue in less time than one year from the date of application.

4. The following are the ordinary conditions required by Turkish Regulations to be fulfilled before a Firman can be issued for a Christian church or school building:—

(1.) The owner of the property must consent to dedicate it inalienably to the purpose specified.

(2.) The land must be free from Mortmain lien ("Vakouf") to any Mahommedan sanctuary, or, in view of the rarity in cities of unencumbered land, the lien must be transformed into a perpetual ground-rent of 1 per cent. per annum of the actual value of the land and its buildings. This transformation into ground-rent requires a special and separate authorization from the Sultan.

(3.) The parties applying for church or school must show that they have a proper number of families living in the district.

(4.) The parties applying must show that they have money to build, and must explain how they became possessed of this money.

(5.) The plan of the building must be approved by the Municipality.

(6.) An official plan of the land and its surroundings must be made by the local city engineers to go with the application.

(7.) The application for the Firman must be approved in writing by the following:—

(*a.*) The neighbours of all sects.

(*b.*) The nearest Moslem Notables.

(*c.*) The Municipality, which must also certify that the site is not in a Mahommedan quarter, and is not "near" a mosque.

(*d.*) The Governor of the province and his Council.

(*e.*) The Minister of the Interior (provisionally).

(*f.*) The Grand Vizier (provisionally).

(*g.*) The Court of Supervision of Mortmain Trusts, which has to give judgment in regular form in favour of the arrangement proposed.

(*h.*) The Minister of the Evkaf (Mortmain Trusts) and his Council.

(*i.*) If the application is for a school, the Minister of Public Instruction and his Council. If it is for a church, the Minister of Justice and Public Worship and his Council.

(*k.*) The Grand Vizier (again provisionally).

(*l.*) The Council of State.

(*m.*) The Council of Ministers.

(*n.*) His Imperial Majesty.

Failure to secure the approval of any one of the above series stops all proceedings, save for such as have direct access to the ear of the Sovereign. A single Notable in the town where the church or school is to be built, can often prevent its construction by a black-ball vote. The application of the Armenian Protestants of Constantinople for a Firman to build a church has been detained ten years in its earliest stages—by certain local men of influence, who wrongly certify, now that it is in a Mahommedan quarter, now that it is "near" a mosque, and now that there are no Protestants in the quarter where forty or fifty Protestant families are almost heart-broken over the opposition to their having a church.

Enough has been said to show that application for an Imperial Firman does not offer a means of escape from the hardships of a Decree understood to mean that missionaries may not exercise their profession in the houses which they inhabit.

II. *The Rights of Missionaries in Turkey.*

(A.)—*The Right to Circulate Books.*

No argument is required to show that after the sovereign right of the Ruler of the Empire to decide what may and what may not be published in his domains has been exercised, and respect for the laws of religious liberty has led to the issue of permits to print the Bible and other religious books, justice requires that this authorization should not be nullified by restrictive orders given to the officials who supervise the operations of the book agents. After a Society established in Turkey has incurred the expense of printing a book on faith of the permit to print it, the principles of the Commercial Treaties ought to protect the Society in its freedom to sell its ware under the authorization which has made them lawful merchandize. Reference to the list given above of expensive and vexatious interferences in the book trade of the Societies, will sufficiently show the bearing of this remark. It is worthy of note, however, that the perpetual examinations and re-examinations of authorized and well-known books, which are a chief obstacle to success in the book trade in Turkey are contrary to law. The following Decree, exempting authorized books from detention for examination, is published in the official collection of the laws of the Ottoman Empire ("Dustur"):—

"Although it was formerly ordered that books published in the Empire, or imported from abroad, should be examined by Custom-house officials, and those deemed injurious seized, yet, since the treatment like those published abroad of books published within the Empire, and transported from one place to another in Turkey, has been found to hinder the desired development of the art of printing, and since no books can be published in the Empire without first obtaining a permit for the same, after examination of their contents, the fact that books have been published by permission will be regarded as sufficient, only books imported from abroad being examined at the Custom-house."—5 Sefer, 1293 (1876).

(B.)—*The General Right of Missionaries to exercise their Profession in Turkey.*

The following documents show that missionaries have a right, fortified by what amounts to an International Agreement, to exercise freely their profession in the Turkish Empire in places which they inhabit or control:—

1. Translation of an extract from the French Capitulations of 1740:

"Article 82. . . . The Bishops and members of the religious Orders under the French Emperor, who are in my Empire, shall be protected so long as they keep within the limits of their calling, and no one shall prevent them from exercising their rights according to their custom in the churches which are in their hands, as well as in the other places which they inhabit, and when our tributary (non-Moslem) subjects and the French go and come between their respective residencies for sales, purchases, or other business, they shall not be molested, contrary to law, on account of these visits. . . . ."

2. Extract from the British Capitulation of 1809:

"Article 18. That all Capitulations and privileges granted to the Venetian, French, and other Princes who are in amity with the Sublime Porte, having been in like manner through favour granted to the English by virtue of our special command, the same shall be always observed according to the form and tenour thereof, so that no one in the future do presume to violate the same or act in contravention thereof."

3. Extract from the Treaty of Berlin, 1878:

"Article 62. . . . The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship are assured to all, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organization of the various communions, or their relations to their spiritual chiefs.

"Ecclesiastics, pilgrims, and monks of all nationalities travelling in Turkey in Europe or in Turkey in Asia, shall enjoy the same rights, advantages, and privileges.

"The right of official protection by the Diplomatic and Consular Agents of the Powers is recognized, both as regards the above-mentioned persons and their religious, charitable, and other establishments in the holy places and elsewhere."

4. The attitude of the United States on this subject:

This is shown by the following extracts from a despatch of Mr. Bayard, Secretary of State of the United States of America, to Mr. Straus, United States' Minister at Constantinople, dated the 20th April, 1887, and published in the volume for 1887 of "The Foreign Relations of the United States":—

". . . . The construction given by Turkey to these Treaties, and especially to the Capitulations to Great Britain, quoted above, is evidenced by her continued protection of the American Missions in Turkey, with their hospitals and schools, in which Turkish patients are received and Turkish children instructed. . . . . The protection by Turkey of the schools established by other religious communions on Turkish soil, a protection which has existed from a time coincident with the establishment of such schools, shows that Turkey has regarded them as among the incidents of the territorial rights assigned by the Capitulations to those religious communions. We have, therefore, in this protection, not only a contemporaneous construction of the Turkish Capitulations, Treaties, and Edicts, but a construction so continuous that it has the force of settled law. . .

"From what has been said it will be seen, therefore, that the right of Protestant citizens or the United States to conduct their various missions, chapels, hospitals, and schools in the way they have been heretofore conducted rests on the privileges of extra-territoriality granted to Christian foreigners in Turkey, as expanded in the present case by usage established in Turkey so as to enable persons of Turkish nationality to be received in such hospitals and schools.

"So far as concerns the right of Americans, whatever be their religious faith, to protection in the exercise of that faith, the right rests on the concessions of extra-territoriality above stated. So far as it concerns their right to receive in their hospitals and schools (otherwise than as servants) persons of Turkish nationality, it rests on usage amounting from duration, and the incidents assigned to it by law, to a Charter."

5. The conformity of this view with that of the Ottoman Government in the past as to the right of missionaries freely to exercise their profession in Turkey, is seen from the following:—

In 1867, Fuad Pasha, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent to the Turkish Representatives in Europe a Circular on the progress made by the Ottoman Government in giving effect to the Hatti-Humayoun of 1856. The climax of his claim in regard to the completeness of religious liberty in Turkey, is in these pregnant words:—

"Not only no Christian or other non-Moslem is or has been constrained to accept Islamism, but the notion of Mahommedan proselytism is unknown in the Ottoman Empire, so that it may be claimed with truth, in respect to religious propaganda, that none exists in Turkey save that which the various Christian sects carry on with a freedom which has no limits but the absolute necessities of public order."

6. Note on the usage of the past in regard to the freedom of missionaries to preach and to teach in Turkey:—

"Usage alone establishes a right, but it also serves to show the interpretation put upon Treaties in cases where a new interpretation is proposed."

(*a.*) The usage of the past shows that the Ottoman Government has hitherto interpreted the Treaties as conferring upon missionaries the right of holding religious worship according to the custom of their communion in their private houses. During sixty years American missionaries have enjoyed this right unquestioned in all parts of Turkey. It has always been conceded that they are entitled to enjoy the rights conferred on the French clergy by the Treaty of 1740 and hence that no Ottoman official may call in question the act of the missionary in holding Divine worship in houses which he owns or controls, or in admitting to such worship such of the people of the country as choose to attend.

(*b.*) The usage of the past shows that the Turkish Government has formerly and continuously interpreted the Capitulations as conferring on missionaries the right to open and carry on schools. It has not only not interfered with such schools in their establishment and continuance to the present period, but it has repeatedly intervened to protect

them against unlawful aggression on the part of ill-disposed persons. Moreover, in the Decree of 1864 concerning the Custom-house franchise accorded to religious bodies and their establishments of benevolence, the Ottoman Government has made formal definition of what these establishments are understood to comprise. It recites, for the information of all concerned (Article 3), that "Since, to the convents named in Article 2 (*i.e.*, of all religious orders in Turkey) there are or may be attached, either in whole or in part, seminaries, and establishments or works of benevolence, such as hospitals, dispensaries for the care of needy and indigent sick, orphanages, *free boarding and day schools* for the instruction of poor children, and *hospices*, the Custom-house will accord to these seminaries, and to each of these works of benevolence, the annual allowance of franchise, which will be distinct, be it well understood, from that given to the persons belonging to the convent."

There is no hint here of authorizations or Firmans for these schools, and at the time of the issue of this Decree the demand for such had never been made. The Decree provides that new schools are entered on the list for enjoyment of the franchise upon a Consular certificate to the fact of their existence. And to-day the Consular certificate is still the document which compels the Administration of the Custom-houses to enter new schools upon the free list. This shows conclusively that missionaries were held, as religious bodies in Turkey have always been held, to be by reason of their religious vocation engaged in teaching the young in schools forming a part of the establishments where they are free to exercise their profession.

But no room remains for denial of the interpretation to be put upon the usage of the past, in respect to the liberty to establish schools, after perusal of the following:—

7. Extract from the Hatti-Humayoun, noted in the Treaty of Paris as an obligation voluntarily assumed by Turkey towards all of the Powers:—

"Moreover, each community is authorized (Turkish *mezun*) to establish its own schools of science, of art, and of industry, only the method of instruction and the choice of teachers in this class of public schools being under the supervision and inspection of a Mixed Council of Instruction, whose members will be appointed by ourself."

The conclusion from the examination of these documents can hardly be other than that the right of missionaries to exercise their profession in Turkey is incontestable. In fact, every examination of the subject only emphasizes the greatness of the innovation which proposes that the missionary may neither hold worship nor open schools until he has fulfilled the cumbersome formalities connected with securing a Firman of authorization from the Sovereign himself.

Constantinople, December 17, 1891.

P.S.—Since the above was in type the following Order, issued by the Sublime Porte, explains fully the attitude towards freedom of worship and freedom of education, which has been adopted by the Ottoman Government.

Translation of General Order of January 1892.

"The prohibition against founding or opening, in the Ottoman Empire, schools or places of worship without obtaining official permission is reiterated. Moreover, peremptory instructions should be given to those concerned, that in respect to schools and places of worship, which have been opened without official permission, it will be necessary for them, within a period fixed according to the locality, to obtain, by the usual method, permits for these also, and, further, that those schools and places of worship which do not obtain permits will be closed at the expiration of the specified time. It must also be made known to them that those who found schools or places of worship without permission will be treated according to provisions of Article 129 of the Law of Public Instruction, and to the present Edict. The decision upon these points of the High Council of Ministers having received by Iradé the sanction of His Imperial Majesty, the orders for its execution have been given."

Inclosure 4 in No. 227.

Memorandum by Mr. Stavrides and Mr. Marinitch on the Grievances of the Evangelical Alliance.

WE have duly perused the documents connected with the grievances of the Evangelical Alliance respecting the difficulties and hindrances raised by the Turkish authorities in religious and educational matters, in spite of the privileges granted by the Hatti-Humayoun and the Treaty of Berlin.

In reply, we beg respectfully to submit that, although the facts set forth in reference to the interference of the authorities with the exercise of religious liberty in the Ottoman Empire may be considered as substantially correct, we beg to express the opinion that as far as the establishment of Christian schools is concerned the law has not been modified so as to justify Her Majesty's Embassy in thinking that the Turkish Government has grown intolerant.

But we are inclined to believe that the alterations made in the law must be rather attributed to political reasons than to fanaticism on the part of the Sublime Porte. In fact, the wide-spread spirit of tolerance which existed for many years after the promulgation of the above-mentioned Imperial Rescript has somewhat changed since the accession of the present Sultan to the throne, and experience has proved that the Laws and Regulations which were enacted these last years have thrown many obstacles in the way of the Heads of religious communities, who are now meeting with greater difficulties in obtaining permission to build churches, schools, hospitals, and other similar philanthropic establishments. Moreover, difficulties are being thrown in the way of the printing and circulation of the Holy Scriptures and of religious books, especially in the provinces, and these difficulties are increased by the proceedings of the censors, who are anxious to show themselves zealous in fulfilling their duties.

Had the present Minister of Public Instruction been a man of more liberal ideas, many of the hindrances complained of would have been averted.

We are inclined to believe that the seditious movement which has spread over some parts of Anatolia having raised to a great extent the suspicions of the local authorities against the Armenians, it is but natural that the community of the native Protestants should have suffered also from the consequences of such a state of things, and the violent measures extended by the Turkish Government to the priests, churches, schools, which could not have been justified had the situation been a normal one, does not constitute, in our opinion, fanaticism, but a means of repression.

Her Majesty's Embassy is well aware that in many instances we have had to deal with such difficulties as those reported, but we have succeeded almost in every case in overcoming them.

In conclusion, we beg to submit to Her Majesty's Embassy that no tangible result could be obtained if a general complaint were lodged on the prevailing system, and we think, therefore, that every case should be treated on its merits when it is brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Embassy by the Evangelical Alliance.

(Signed) MARINITCH.
STAVRIDES.

Constantinople, February 28, 1895.

Inclosure 5 in No. 227.

Memorandum.

WITH reference to Mr. Marinitch and Mr. Stavrides' Memorandum of to-day, I beg to observe that the Central Government, in issuing orders for increased vigilance in regard to Christian churches and schools, &c., is not animated by fanaticism. A political object alone is in view; but unfortunately subordinate officials misinterpret the spirit of the instructions, and knowing that the Armenians are looked upon by the Government as seditious, and not without some reason, since some 8 or 10 per cent. have meddled with political agitation, take every opportunity of curtailing their privileges, being well aware that any action of this kind may bring them rewards and decorations for what is in reality misplaced zeal.

The Christians, and especially native Protestants, are, owing to their superior education and the more liberal ideas with which, thanks to English and American

assistance, they are being imbued, fast outstripping the simple Turkish peasant, and fearful lest they should obtain a preponderant influence to the detriment of the Mussulman element, the Government vainly strives to suppress the means of education and enlightenment.

Fanaticism is certainly at the present moment on the increase, but it is owing to recent political events, and the more the Christian raises his head and European Powers intervene to assist him, the more will the Moslems, with no one to stand up for them, and envious of their Christian neighbours, endeavour to stifle his aspirations, and, when unsuccessful, will pass from mistrust and envy to fanaticism. Retaliation will ensue, and only serve to increase the bad feeling.

Thus fanaticism, non-existent before, is spreading even to Government circles; but it would be a mistake to suppose that all the facts mentioned by Mr. Dwight and the Evangelical Alliance have a religious or a fanatical origin. I think, then, to take up the question on that ground would be an error, and I agree with MM. Stavrides and Marinitch that every case should be treated on its merits, as heretofore.

For England to take upon herself the task alone of remedying the general situation would be politically unwise, and might do more harm than good. If, however, the general question is to be attacked, it should be taken up by all the Protestant Powers, as laid down by Her Majesty's Government, if I remember right, in Sir W. White's time. Indeed, in bringing even isolated cases to the notice of the Porte, it might be well that in every case the Representatives of Germany, the United States, and Holland should be approached as well as this Embassy.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

P.S.—The Turkish Government is bitterly opposed since the Marsovan College incident to American schools in the Armenian provinces, because, as these gentlemen are the representatives of a Republican country, where free institutions and liberal ideas prevail, their teaching doubtless spreads among the Armenians subversive ideas and discontent with the narrow and backward Turkish Administration.

A. B.

Constantinople, February 28, 1895.

No. 228.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 149.) *Constantinople, March* 6, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum forwarding copies of the joint Reports drawn up by the Consular Delegates of the first eight sittings of the Sassoon Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 228.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.) *Erzeroum, February* 12, 1895.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of despatches which I have received from Mr. Shipley containing information as to the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sassoon occurrences since its arrival at Moush, and inclosing joint Reports drawn up by the Consular Delegates of the first eight sittings of the Commission.

The subjects of Mr. Shipley's despatches Nos. 2, 3, and 4,* namely, the understanding arrived at between the Delegates as to the use to be made by them of outside information before the Commission; the dismissal of the Vali of Bitlis; and the order of conducting the inquiry adopted by the Turkish Commissioners, have

* Inclosures 3, 4, and 6 in No. 228.

already been briefly dealt with in my despatches to your Excellency of the 25th January, and of the 1st February.

In his despatch of the 4th February Mr. Shipley incloses reports of the proceedings of the Commission from the 27th January to the 2nd February inclusive, some of which are of the highest interest.

As I anticipated, the evidence called by the Turkish Commissioners so far, being based upon the official version of the affair put forward by the Bitlis authorities, has proved to be entirely of an *ex parte* character. But it is significant that the gendarmerie officers and men who gave an account of the earlier conflicts between the Kurds and Armenians, and the desertion of their villages by the latter when they took refuge upon the Antok Mountain, did not attempt to give any reasonable explanation of the origin of the disturbances, into which they had apparently made no inquiry, and that they only spoke from hearsay of the alleged atrocities by Armenians upon Kurds. It must also be remarked that only one Kurd is said to have been killed and two wounded in these collisions, while nothing is said of any loss on the Armenian side, although I have reason to believe that the latter suffered at least as heavily as the Kurds; and the Tabour Agassi in command of the gendarmerie, who is said to have interrogated the Kurdish woman who complained of ill-treatment at the hands of the Armenians, was not called before the Commission.

On the other hand, the important evidence of the witness Erko (Report No. 7),* substantially confirming the truth of Mr. Hallward's reports, and of the information forwarded by me to your Excellency, was only brought before the Commission by the action of the Delegates, though it was open to the Commissioners to have called this man, and many other Sassoon survivors now in or near Moush. It is to be hoped that, as the Delegates have just been instructed to press the Commissioners to visit without delay the village in which a number of the Shenik villagers are to be found, a large mass of direct evidence from the Armenian point of view will shortly be laid before the Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 228.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Moush, January 22, 1895.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to you that I arrived yesterday at Moush, together with M. Vilbert and M. Prjvalsky, the French and Russian Delegates attached to the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry, having performed the journey from Erzeroum in company with Shefik Bey, the President, and Djelal Bey, one of the members of the Commission above referred to.

I feel it is only due to the two latter-named gentlemen to say that the journey in question, which at this season is a somewhat difficult one, was greatly facilitated by the unvarying courtesy and kindness showed by them, and by the assistance rendered by the escort furnished by the Imperial Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 3 in No. 228.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

(Confidential.)

Moush, January 25, 1895.

Sir,

IT will be in your recollection that whereas I and my Russian colleague, M. Prjvalsky, were respectively authorized by yourself and the Russian Consul-General previously to our departure from Erzeroum to use our discretion as to the question of obtaining information from sources other than those provided by the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry itself, it was thought necessary by

* Inclosure 14 in No. 228.

M. Bergeron, the French Vice-Consul at Erzeroum, to recommend to M. Vilbert, the French Delegate, a greater reserve for reasons explained by you in a despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, Confidential, of the 11th instant.

In view, however, of the urgent necessity of coming to a clear understanding upon the point at issue before the commencement of the actual work of the Commission, I took an opportunity shortly after our arrival at Moush of proposing the following arrangement to my colleagues, viz., that while each Delegate should be at liberty to profit by any information he might obtain apart from and outside of the proceedings of the Commission itself, no use should be made of it before the Commissioners unless the advisability of so doing should have been previously agreed upon by the Delegates. The arrangement in question, which was at once accepted by my colleagues, appears to me to afford a fairly satisfactory solution of a question which, if allowed to remain unsettled, might have given rise to serious misunderstanding. I venture, therefore, to hope that my action in the matter will meet with your approval.

I had the honour to communicate the substance of the above to you by telegraph yesterday.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 4 in No. 228.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Moush, January 25, 1895.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith an identic copy of the Report of the proceedings at the first sitting held yesterday of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry duly drawn up and signed by myself and my two colleagues attached to the Commission in question.

The proceedings, as you will observe, were of a purely formal character, with the exception of those in connection with the request made by the Consular Delegates to the Commission for the suspension, pending the inquiry, of the Vali of Bitlis, and with reference to this incident I would beg to observe that the form in which the request referred to was made was based upon the text of the instructions given to the French Delegate, and which were "de prier le Président de la Commission de saisir le Gouvernement Impérial d'une demande de suspension du Vali de Bitlis."

The reply of the President, viz., that the Commissioners, while not agreeing that there was any necessity for the step in question, in view of the sufficiency of the powers already held by them, would, nevertheless, transmit the request of the Delegates to the Sublime Porte "à titre de renseignement," I have already had the honour to communicate to you in my telegram of yesterday's date. There was little or no discussion on the matter, as our instructions appeared to restrict our action to a simple enunciation of the demand. I need hardly, however, say that even with our short residence at Moush my colleagues and myself are fully convinced that some such step is imperatively necessary in order to insure a full and complete investigation of the facts at issue.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 5 in No. 228.

Procès-verbal No. 1 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January 24, 1895.

LA Commission d'Enquête chargée par Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan d'approfondir et d'examiner l'affaire de Sassoun, et composée de Djelal Bey, Omer Bey, Madjid Bey, et Hassan Tewfik Pasha, a tenu aujourd'hui, 24 Janvier, sa première séance sous la présidence de son Excellence Chéfik Bey.

MM. Vilbert, Délégué du Consul de France; Shipley, Délégué du Consul de la Grande-Bretagne; et Prjvalsky, Délégué du Consul-Général de Russie à Erzeroum, étaient présents.

Le Président, après avoir déclaré la Commission constituée, a rappelé à ses collègues le texte des instructions Impériales d'après lesquelles ils devront s'acquitter de la haute mission qui leur est confiée en toute impartialité et justice; il a ajouté que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté pour publier à nouveau ses intentions pures et équitables, avait obtenu des Puissances représentées à Erzeroum l'autorisation pour leurs Consuls de se faire représenter auprès de la Commission par des Délégués qui assisteraient à toutes ses opérations et l'aideraient de leurs concours.

Le Président a proposé, avant de procéder aux travaux mêmes de l'enquête, d'attendre l'arrivée très prochaine de pièces relatives à l'affaire de Sassoun et lui ayant été adressées de Bitlis, et de demander au Mutessarif de Moush communication des pièces de même nature qui seraient en sa possession. Cette proposition a été adoptée à l'unanimité.

Les Délégués Consulaires ont alors prié la Commission de vouloir bien, dans le but d'assurer l'indépendance et l'impartialité de l'enquête, réclamer jusqu'à son complet achèvement, du Gouvernement Impérial, la suspension du Vali de Bitlis.

Le Président, après en avoir délibéré avec ses collègues hors de la présence des Délégués, leur a fait connaître que la Commission se trouvant suffisamment armée pour garantir à l'enquête la liberté nécessaire, ne voyait pas l'opportunité d'une pareille demande de sa part, mais qu'il transmettrait néanmoins cette proposition à la Sublime Porte à titre de simple renseignement.

Le Président a déclaré la séance terminée.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. PRIVALSKY.
M. VILBERT.

Inclosure 6 in No. 228.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Moush, January 28, 1895.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith the Report duly drawn up by myself and colleagues at the proceedings at the second sitting of the Commission of Inquiry of the 26th January, which were of some importance as establishing the line of inquiry which the Commissioners proposed to adopt. The President, as you will observe, after reading out a summary of the documents which he had received from the authorities at Bitlis, and which went to show that the immediate cause of the troubles at Sassoon of last year was the assembly in large numbers, at the instigation of political agitators, strangers to the district, of armed Armenians in the villages of Ghelié-Gazan, Chenik, Semel, and in the district of Talori itself, and of the attacks of the latter upon the Kurds camped in the summer pasturages, proposed to begin the inquiry by summoning all persons to whom reference had been made in the documents in question, a proposition which met with the assent of his colleagues.

There was, I may remark, no allusion whatever in the above documents to any excesses, either on the part of the Imperial troops or the Kurds, and as both myself and my colleagues felt it to be extremely uncertain as to how long it might be before the proceedings so conducted would yield any definite result, I addressed the President with their concurrence, stating that accusations had been brought against the Imperial troops of having burnt some twenty-seven Armenian villages and of having massacred a great part of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, and that while fully recognizing the right of the Commissioners to direct what course should be pursued in investigating the events of Sassoon of last year, we considered that these were accusations, the truth or falsehood of which it would be preferable to establish first, leaving the question of responsibility to be settled afterwards.

The Turkish Commissioners, after a somewhat protracted discussion, unanimously decided to adopt the proposition of the President.

I had the honour to communicate to you the substance of the above in my telegram of the 27th instant; and I now beg to add that while in taking the above course I acted in entire accord with my colleagues, we considered that, in view of our instructions and of the assurances of the President, that each incident would

receive the fullest and most impartial investigation, it would be unadvisable to persist in our objection to the course decided upon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 7 in No. 228.

Procès-verbal No. 2 *of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January* 26, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Le Président donne lecture des pièces qui lui sont parvenues de Bitlis, relatives aux débats de l'affaire de Talori et qui sont le résumé des communications échangées entre les autorités de Moush, Quendj, Koulb, Talori, de lettres particulières adressées aux Patriarcats Arméniens, Grégoriens, et Catholiques de Constantinople. Il résulterait de ces documents que l'autorité Ottomane, informée dans la dernière quinzaine du mois de Juillet 1894 (v. s.), soit par des rapports officiels, soit par la police secrète, de rassemblements d'Arméniens au nombre de plusieurs centaines en armes dans les villages de Semel, Chenik, Guelié-Guzan, et dans ceux du district de Talori même, auraient cru nécessaire d'envoyer plusieurs contingents de troupes régulières Impériales pour réprimer ce qu'elle considérait comme une rébellion armée fomentée par des agitateurs politiques étrangers au pays, et en protéger les habitants Musulmans contre les actes de cruauté revoltante dont ils auraient été victimes de la part de ces bandes Arméniennes.

Le Président propose à ses collègues, qui se rallient à son opinion, de suivre pour procéder à l'enquête l'ordre chronologique des événements et de faire comparaître en premier lieu devant la Commission toutes les personnes qui se seraient trouvées mêlées aux incidents que relatent les pièces ci-dessus mentionnées.

Les Délégués Consulaires en reconnaissant que la direction exclusive de l'enquête appartient à la Commission croient de leur devoir de faire observer au Président que l'accusation d'avoir brûlé des villages au nombre approximatif de vingt-sept dans le Sassoon, et d'en avoir massacré les habitants, hommes, femmes, et enfants, ayant été formulée contre des troupes Impériales et des Kurdes en bandes, il y aurait intérêt, d'après eux, à vérifier tout d'abord les faits, quitte à établir ensuite la responsabilité.

Le Président, tout en donnant acte aux Délégués de leur suggestion dans le procès-verbal de la séance, décide, d'accord avec ses collègues, de procéder suivant ce que la Commission considère comme l'ordre natural de l'enquête.

Il affirme que chacune des phases de l'affaire de Sassoun sera examinée en son temps avec tout le développement nécessaire.

Le Président clôt la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRIVALSKY.

Inclosure 8 in No. 228.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Moush, January 30, 1895.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to you, with reference to my telegram of to-day's date, that Omer Bey, the newly-appointed Vali of Bitlis, left for the latter city to-day to take up his post. I communicated to my colleagues the information respecting Tahsin Pasha, contained in your telegram of the 28th January, and as the dismissal of the latter had already been announced to us officially by Chéfik Bey, the President of the Commission of Inquiry, we attended, at his invitation, yesterday's sitting of the Commission as usual. I transmit herewith our joint Report of the third sitting of the Commission held on the 28th January, at which the Consular Delegates made a joint statement to the President of the Commission

to the effect that, pending the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis, they had been instructed to abstain from attendance at the meetings.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 9 in No. 228.

Procès-verbal No. 3 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January 28, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission, à l'exception d'Omer Bey, indisposé, étaient présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Au début de la séance, les Délégués Consulaires se conformant à leurs instructions, déclarent au Président que, tant que le Vali de Bitlis n'aura pas été suspendu de ses fonctions pour toute la durée de l'enquête, ils devront s'abstenir d'y participer, et qu'en outre, toute opération faite en dehors de leur présence sera considérée comme nulle.

Le Président prend acte de cette communication et fait savoir aux Délégués Consulaires qu'en raison des instructions qui prescrivent à la Commission d'agir de concert avec eux, il fera part de leur déclaration à la Sublime Porte à titre de renseignement.

Les Délégués Consulaires se retirent de la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 10 in No. 228.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, February 4*, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith the joint Reports drawn up by the Consular Delegates, Nos. 4 to 8 inclusive, of the proceedings at the sittings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry of the 29th, 30th, and 31st January, and 1st and 2nd February respectively.

Of the above Reports, No. 4 contains the depositions of Pshender Agha, Yuzbashi; Saadullah, Sergeant; and Medjid Agha, Corporal of zaptiehs at Moush, relative to alleged attacks in the latter part of July last (o. s.) by the Armenians of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan on certain Velikanli Kurds camped on their summer pasturages on the Kourtik Mountain, and which, with a force of zaptiehs under the command of Major Fevzi Effendi, they were sent by the Moush authorities to investigate.

Their evidence, in so much as it was drawn almost exclusively from Kurdish sources, cannot be regarded as conclusively establishing that the whole responsibility for the attack above referred to rested upon the Armenians, and it will be noticed from the answers to the questions addressed to the witnesses by the Consular Delegates that the only motive which they were able to adduce for the above aggression on the part of the Armenians seemed to have been a quarrel about a cloak belonging to an Armenian shepherd, which a Kurd had found and refused to give up. It will further be noticed that Fevzi Effendi was not called, an omission which the President, on the suggestion of the Delegates, promised to rectify.

Report No. 5 contains the deposition of Faris Agha, Lieutenant of zaptiehs of Moush, relative to the ill-treatment alleged to have been met with by a certain Mehemed, a Kurd of Tapik, Sassoon Caza, at the hands of the villagers of Ghelié-Guzan some time before the 12th (24th) July last.

The deposition of this latter witness may be regarded as important, in so far as it establishes the fact that up to the date last mentioned the villages of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan were still occupied by their inhabitants.

The sitting of the 31st January (Report No. 6) was chiefly taken up by the

reading of official reports, &c., respecting the attacks of the Armenians upon the Kurds above referred to. A letter addressed to the Commission by Bishop Garabed, of the Monastery of Tchanli (Surp Garabed), near Moush, was also read, asking pardon for the Armenians who had been led astray by political agitators, and asking to be allowed to attend the Commission to give evidence.

The proceedings at the sitting of the Commission of the 1st February and following days were, it will be seen, of a most important nature, as they included the statements of an Armenian named Erko, an inhabitant of the village of Shenik, who deposed that he was an eye-witness of the final assault by the Turkish troops and Kurds on the Armenian position on the Antok Dagh, and of the massacre by the former of the inhabitants of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan, he himself being wounded in the Passin Mountain, whither he had fled from Antok. His testimony is, moreover, additionally noteworthy, from the fact that with that of his brother Gourdjo it is the first that has come before the Commission, giving an account of events from an Armenian point of view which, I need scarcely say, differs very widely from that given by the Kurds. He was submitted to a very severe examination on the part of the Commissioners, but, as a whole, he adhered firmly to his original statements.

With regard to the general conduct of the inquiry by the Turkish Commissioners, I feel bound to say that the tendency of the latter seems to be to base the proceedings too much on official documents, the object apparently being to prove in the first instance that the Armenians were in armed rebellion, and that the authorities had no option but to act as they did, viz., to suppress it by the dispatch of troops. I trust in saying this I am not misrepresenting the intention of the Commissioners, but it is certainly significant that so far the only two Armenians examined before the Commission were summoned at the request of M. Prjvalsky, the Russian Delegate, after consultation with myself and M. Vilbert. From a Turkish point of view no doubt the claim to conduct the inquiry in "chronological order" is a perfectly legitimate one, but I cannot but think, and my colleagues agree with me, that it would be to the better advantage of the Turkish Government to inquire at once into the truth of allegations so serious as those made by the witness Erko.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 11 in No. 228.

Procès-verbal No. 4 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January 29, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission, à l'exception d'Omer Bey, sont présents ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Le Président en ouvrant la séance fait part aux Délégués de la destitution de Tahsin Pasha, Vali de Bitlis, de son remplacement provisoire par Omer Bey, membre de la Commission, et les invite à assister de nouveau aux opérations de l'enquête.

Il décide, d'accord avec ses collègues, l'envoi d'un télégramme à l'autorité judiciaire de Bitlis, pour hâter l'expédition de pièces complémentaires, manquant du dossier, la comparution des Moukhtars de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan, accompagnés de deux ou trois habitants de chacun de ces villages, ainsi que celle de six Arméniens originaires de ces mêmes endroits et signataires d'une requête par laquelle ils demandent à la Commission la restitution de bestiaux à eux volés.

Avant la comparution des témoins, les Délégués Consulaires suggèrent au Président l'idée que chaque témoin pourra être requis de répéter sa déposition dans la foi du serment, ce qui est adopté par la Commission.

Les trois témoins entendus dans la séance sont:—

Ishender Agha, Yuzbachi (Capitaine) de zaptiés en garnison à Moush.

Saad-Ullah, *alias* Saïd Agha Tchaouch (Sergent); et Medjid Agha Onbachi (Caporal) de zaptiés également à Moush.

Il résulte de la déposition d'Ishender Agha que dans les derniers jours du mois

de Juillet (v. s.) 1894, sur l'ordre du Mutessarif de Moush, auquel les Kurdes de la tribu des Velikauli campés à Merguezer, sur la hauteur de Kourtik, leur pâturage d'été habituel sis à trois heures environ de Moush, avaient porté plainte, il se rendit avec une trentaine de zaptiés et les deux témoins précités sous le commandement d'un "Tabour Aghassi" (Chef de Battalion de zaptiés) nommé Fevzi Effendi, à l'endroit en question, où il apprit des Kurdes les faits suivants.

L'avant-veille dans la nuit, une attaque à main armée, qu'ils avaient repoussée de même, avait eu lieu contre leurs tentes de la part d'individus qu'à leur langage ils avaient reconnu être des Arméniens. Le lendemain les Kurdes ne se trouvant plus en sûreté à Kourtik, avaient déjà en partie pris la route de Moush, quand ils avaient été rappelés par les cris de détresse de leurs compagnons restés en arrière et attaqués par les mêmes agresseurs, en plus grand nombre cette fois; au cours de ces rixes, un Kurde dont le témoin a vu le cadavre, avait été tué, deux autres grièvement blessés, et une femme Kurde maltraitée par les Arméniens et dépouillée de ses vêtements. Les Arméniens qui étaient tous des habitants de Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-Guzan se retirèrent ensuite dans l'Antok Dagh, après avoir brûlé des tentes Kurdes, et en avoir emmené des bestiaux, tels qu'agneaux, bœufs, &c., au nombre approximatif de 150 têtes.

Le témoin Ishender Agha en compagnie du "Tabour Aghassi" (Chef de Bataillon de zaptiés), de Saad Ullah, et de Medjid Aghas, se rendit à Merguémouzan, où depuis trois mois environ campaient deux compagnies du 4e bataillon du 32e régiment d'infanterie. Le témoin remarqua que ces deux compagnies s'entouraient de vedettes et apprit des Capitaines Mahmoud Agha et Ibrahim Agha et des Lieutenants Ali et Hassan Effendis, que, les Arméniens ayant hautement déclaré qu'ils écraseraient les troupes Impériales, le détachement de Merguémouzan devait toutes les nuits prendre des précautions extraordinaires. Le témoin constata lui-même que les hauteurs d'Antok Dagh étaient éclairées par des feux nombreux.

Le lendemain matin, le témoin accompagna le "Tabour Aghassi" à Chenik, qu'il trouva abandonné par tous ses habitants, à l'exception de quelques vieilles femmes, dont l'une finit par leur amener un Arménien qui nia avoir connaissance d'aucune agression contre les Kurdes, et qui se rendit avec Saad-Ullah et Medjid, sur l'ordre de Fevzi Effendi, auprès des Arméniens cachés dans un ravin boisé à une heure de distance du village et à deux heures du sommet d'Antok Dagh. Ceux-ci, du nombre d'une centaine environ, armés d'armes de Bachi-Bozoucks, tels que fusils-à-pierre, poignards, sabres, &c., consentirent à restituer les bestiaux volés aux Kurdes au nombre d'à peu près 127 moutons et quinze bœufs.

En les ramenant à leurs propriétaires le témoin rencontra sur le Kani Melan un Kurde Karakauli qui raconta que son frère Suleiman aurait été tué par des Arméniens de Ghelié-Guzan, près de la forêt d'Alian et qu'ils auraient ensuite mis le feu à la poudre dont ils avaient rempli le cadavre.

Le deuxième témoin, Saad-Ullah, *alias* Saïd, Tchaouch (Sergent de zaptiés), confirme en tous points la déposition précédente en ce qui concerne ce qui s'est passé soit à Chenik, soit à Merguézer.

Le troisième témoin, Medjid "Onbachi" (Caporal de zaptiés) à Moush, attaché aux troupes régulières, campant à Merguemouzan, étant allé ce même jour pour le ravitaillement des troupes à Semal, qu'il trouva tout à fait désert, se rencontra à Chenik avec les deux témoins précédents, dont il confirme les dépositions.

En réponse aux questions posées par les Délégués Consulaires, le premier témoin, Iskender Agha, déclare qu'il n'a pas vu lui-même la femme Kurde qui aurait été maltraitée par les Arméniens, mais que le "Tabour Aghassi" Fevzi Effendi l'a interrogée et que seul ce même officier peut dire pourquoi personne n'a été chargé d'aller demander aux Arméniens les motifs de leur exode et la raison de leur conduite. Qu'à sa connaissance, il n'y aurait pas d'autre cause aux attaques des Arméniens contre les Kurdes qu'une dispute antérieure à l'occasion d'un manteau perdu par un Arménien et que les Kurdes auraient trouvé et refusé de restituer.

Qu'il n'a ni demandé ni entendu dire à personne s'il y avait eu des Arméniens tués ou blessés au cours de leurs deux rixes avec les Kurdes.

Que l'Antok Dagh, où les Arméniens s'étaient retirés avec femmes et enfants, n'était pas leur pâturage d'été habituel et que, d'ailleurs, quand ils s'y rendent, ils ne prennent avec eux que quelques femmes pour soigner les troupeaux.

De son côté, Medjid répond que bien que détaché depuis trois mois à Merguemouzan, distant de Chenik de vingt minutes, de Semal de trente minutes, de Ghelié-Guzan une heure et demie, villages où il se rendait de temps à autre pour le ravitaillement des troupes, il n'a ni interrogé les villageois Arméniens sur leurs rapports avec les Kurdes, ni rien entendu dire par eux sur les raisons qui les ont poussés à abandonner leurs villages, mais qu'il a appris des Kurdes Badikauli, venant de Diarbékir, que les Arméniens auraient l'intention de détruire les troupes Impériales.

Ghelié-Guzan une heure et demie, villages où il se rendait de temps à autre pour le ravitaillement des troupes, il n'a ni interrogé les villageois Arméniens sur leurs rapports avec les Kurdes, ni rien entendu dire par eux sur les raisons qui les ont poussés à abandonner leurs villages, mais qu'il a appris des Kurdes Badikauli, venant de Diarbékir, que les Arméniens auraient l'intention de détruire les troupes Impériales.

Le Président clôt la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 12 in No. 228.

Procès-verbal No. 5 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January 30, 1895.

Présents:

Son Excellence Chéfik Bey, *Président.*
Son Excellence Djilal Bey.
Son Excellence Madjid Bey.
Le Général Hassan Tewfik Pasha; et les
Délégués Consulaires.

Omer Bey, par suite de ses nouvelles fonctions, a cessé d'assister aux séances de la Commission.

LE témoin Faris Agha, "Mulazim" (Lieutenant) de zaptiés à Moush, est invité par le Président à reproduire le récit fait à lui le 12 (24) Juillet, 1894, par un nommé Mehemed Agha, Kurde, du village de Tapik, dépendant du Caza de Sassoun.

Le témoin, revenant du village de Kegashen, vers Moush, rencontra le dit Mehemed qui lui dit avoir été saisi par les Arméniens de Ghelié-Guzan, entraîné dans un ravin, menacé de mort et n'avoir dû la vie qu'à l'intervention d'un Chrétien qui le réclama comme un de ses amis. Le témoin ajoute que Mehemed ne portait pas de blessures, mais seulement les traces de coups au visage.

Interrogé le témoin déclare n'avoir ni demandé ni entendu de Mehemed ni d'aucune autre source, les raisons des faits de voie dont les Arméniens auraient été les auteurs.

Le témoin dit qu'à la date du 12 (24) Juillet, 1894, les villages de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan étaient encore occupés par leurs habitants.

Le témoin Medjid, Onbachi (Caporal) de zaptiés, entendu dans la séance précédente et rappelé de nouveau, dit que, contrairement à un rapport de police, dont le Président donne lecture, il n'aurait ni parlé au nommé Bairam, soldat de la 2e compagnie d'infanterie à Moush, ni entendu faire mention par ce dernier d'un cadavre Kurde, aux yeux arrachés, aux nez, lèvres, oreilles et abdomen coupés, qui trouvé dans le Caza de Koulp, près de Ghelié-Ghénim, avait été entre le 14 et le 17 Juillet (v. s.), 1894, apporté au Commandant des troupes Impériales, compris près de Chenik.

Le témoin lui-même n'a pas vu le cadavre, mais a entendu raconter le fait par des Kurdes Badikauli dont il ignore les noms et par des soldats de Moush.

Le Président clôt la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 13 in No. 228.

Procès-verbal No. 6 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January 31, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission étaient présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Le Président donne lecture des pièces suivantes relatives aux deux attaques dont les Kurdes auraient été l'objet de la part des Arméniens à Merguezen dans les derniers jours de Juillet 1894 (v. s.) :—

1. Requête des Kurdes Velikanli, signé par Nadir Ben Simo, Hassan Ben Kado, Alo Ben Hamo, Bektache Oghlou Omer, Ibrahim, Essad, se plaignant au Mutessarif de Moush d'avoir été attaqués, comme il est dit ci-dessous, par des Arméniens de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan, au nombre de 300, qui tuèrent le nommé Omer Ben Kado, blessèrent mortellement le nommé Temo Ben Farho, et gravement le nommé Redjeh Ben Bektache.

2. Rapport officiel des médecins de Moush, constatant que la mort et les blessures des trois Kurdes précités ont dû être causées par une balle, soit de fusil Winchester, soit de revolver.

3. Réquisitoire du Substitut du Procureur-Impérial qui ordonne des poursuites.

4. Rapport du nommé Méhémet Feizi, gendarme de Moush, résumant les événements de Merguezen et de Chenik, tels qu'ils ont été narrés par les témoins entendus dans la séance du 29 Janvier.

Le Président fera demander aux autorités judiciaires de Moush la suite donnée par elles à la plainte des Kurdes Vélikanli, et décide la comparution d'Arméniens, signataires d'une requête remise la veille à la Commission.

5. Lettre du Sieur Garabed, Évêque du Monastère de Sakavi, et Abbé du Monastère de Tchanli, *alias* Sourp Garabed, qui en apprenant la mission dont la Commission d'enquête est chargée, croit devoir faire connaître la vérité. Il demande le pardon des Arméniens qui, se laissant corrompre par les idées révolutionnaires qu'ont semées parmi eux depuis cinq ans Nersès, Évêque de Moush, Damadian Arabo, et en dernier lieu un individu étranger portant un kalpak noir, se sont portés à des attaques contre les Kurdes, à la suite desquelles ils se sont retirés en nombre dans l'Antok Dagh. Il désavoue ces faits au nom de la nation Arménienne.

Le Président décide que, conformément à son désir, le signataire de cette lettre sera invité à comparaître devant la Commission.

Sur la proposition qui en avait été faite par les Délégués Consulaires, comparaissent les deux témoins suivants, les frères Gourdjo et Erko, Arméniens, fils de Kourki, et paysans de Chenik.

Attendu que leurs déclarations se complètent l'une l'autre, et que la suite de l'interrogatoire d'Erko est remise à la séance suivante, leurs dépositions à tous deux seront incluses dans le procès-verbal relatif à cette séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 14 in No. 228.

Procès-verbal No. 7 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 1, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires, sont présents.

Le témoin, Gourdjo, fils de Kourki, ayant été arrêté à Moush entre les 7 et 10 Juillet (v. s.), 1894, avant les attaques dont les Kurdes Vélikanli auraient été l'objet de la part des Arméniens à Kourtik, sa déposition ne porte pas directement sur l'ensemble des événements de Sassoun.

Interrogé sur les causes de son arrestation, il répond qu'elle était motivée par les soupçons qu'avaient les autorités de sa connivence avec des étrangers qui auraient apporté des armes dans son district. Le témoin nie avoir eu connaissance

d'un pareil fait, et ignore si d'autres individus quelconques sont venus à son village.

Le second témoin entendu est le frère aîné du précédent. Son nom est Erko, fils de Kourki, âgé de 58 à 60 ans, marié, père de famille, paysan fermier de Chenik, portant sur la joue droite la cicatrice d'une blessure qui paraît récente emprisonné à Moush le jour où il présenta une requête à son Excellence Abdullah Pacha, soit il y a un mois environ. Sa détention serait motivée par la disparition d'un Musulman nommé Khourchid, dans la montagne du côté de Passour.

Le témoin ne parlant qu'Arménien, la traduction de sa déposition est faite par l'intermédiaire du nommé Setrak, qui s'étant acquitté d'une façon défectueuse de ses fonctions, est remplacé pour la plus grande partie de l'interrogatoire par Tateos Effendi, membre du Tribunal de Première Instance de Moush.

Le témoin Erko fait les déclarations suivantes :—

1. Au sujet des deux rixes entre Arméniens et Kurdes. Les causes en seraient dues à un vol de trois bœufs commis par les Kurdes Vélikanli au préjudice des Arméniens de Semal, d'une trentaine de moutons au préjudice des Arméniens de Chenik, qui purent les reprendre contre le payement de 30 piastres, et de deux manteaux pris par ces mêmes Kurdes à deux bergers, qu'ils maltraitèrent; ils volèrent également 100 moutons appartenant au témoin lui-même. Pour se faire rendre ce dernier bétail, les bergers de Chenik, en compagnie des villageois, allèrent au campement des Kurdes à Kourtik, et leur prétention donna lieu dans les derniers jours de Juillet (v. s.) 1944, aux deux rixes dont il a été précédemment fait mention et auxquelles le témoin nie avoir participé, car il se trouvait alors aux champs. A ce qu'il a entendu dire postérieurement, un Kurde aurait été tué, et deux autres Kurdes blessés.

Les Arméniens reprirent les bestiaux volés avec une certaine quantité d'agneaux appartenant aux Kurdes.

Sur ces entrefaites arriva à Chenik, accompagné d'Iskender Agha, le "Tabour Aghassi" (Chef de Bataillon de zaptiés), avec une trentaine de zaptiés; les villageois étaient qui dans leurs champs, qui dans la forêt, qui dans leur pâturage d'été, qui dans le village, où se trouvait le témoin lui-même. Il restitua à Iskender Agha les agneaux pris aux Kurdes, en se plaignant particulièrement au "Tabour Aghassi" des difficultés que leur créait le Kurde Simonen Oghlou, et il en reçut l'assurance que ce dernier ne mêlerait plus ses moutons aux siens. Le témoin n'a entendu dire par aucun des deux officiers qu'il y ait eu de Kurdes tués. Les villageois de Chenik étaient dans l'intention de venir à Moush porter plainte contre le dit Simonen Oghlou quand ils apprirent dans la suite qu'un Kurde aurait été tué; la crainte les fit renoncer à leur projet.

2. Au sujet des attaques des villages de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan par les Kurdes Badikanli et Bakiranli et de la fuite des Arméniens sur l'Antok Dagh.

Simonen Oghlou revenu de Moush, où il était allé se plaindre du vol de bestiaux commis par les Arméniens, annonça au "Kol Agassi" (Capitaine) des troupes de Merguemouzan, qu'ils avaient été déclarés rebelles ("firmanli"). Les Kurdes Bakiranli promirent alors aux villageois de les sauver à condition que chacun des trois villages paierait une somme de 2,000 piastres. Ceux de Chenik refusèrent en disant: "Pourquoi vous donner une telle somme? L'eussions-nous, nous la donnerions au Gouvernement." Neanmoins, ils proposèrent, à la place des bestiaux, du beurre, et que les Kurdes n'acceptèrent pas, en alléguant la crainte que les troupes campées à Merguemouzan vinssent à le savoir, ils menacèrent les villageois de les exterminer s'ils ne versaient pas la somme exigée. Le lendemain les Kurdes Bakiranli et Badikanli, au nombre de 1,000 environ, attaquèrent les villages de Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-Gusan, mais furent repoussés par les habitants, qui perdirent trois hommes de chaque village et une femme. Le surlendemain les Kurdes, secondés par les troupes de Merguemouzan, se préparaient à renouveler leur attaque quand les villageois, effrayés à la vue des troupes, se sauvèrent avec les veillards, femmes, et enfants, et en y amenant leur bétail sur l'Antok Dagh, où les Kurdes les poursuivent, pendant que les vieilles femmes et les habitants restés au village étaient massacrés. Le nombre total des Arméniens de ces trois villages atteignait 3,000 ou 4,000 hommes, dont 300 ou 400 portaient les armes provenant de leurs pères, fusils à poudre, sabres, poignards, &c., se servant de poudre fabriquée par eux-mêmes dans leurs villages, et de plomb acheté dans les villes. Le témoin affirme qu'ils n'avaient pas de chef, que ni Mourad ou Hamparsoun ne se trouvait parmi eux, qu'ils s'étaient réunis à leurs prêtres et à leurs Kiahias (Primats), dont

le principal était un Keko (Kirko) tué postérieurement, qu'il n'y avait pas davantage de Russe comme les Kurdes en avaient fait courir le bruit. Pendant onze jours ils se maintinrent sur les hauteurs, assez escarpées, s'abritant derrière les rochers où les balles des Kurdes et des soldats ne pouvaient les atteindre. Le douzième jour environ ils aperçurent des quantités considérables de Kurdes commandés par le Cheikh Mehemed, venant de la direction de Diarbékir, par le Cheikh Omer, venant de Koulp, et que le témoin, pressé de questions, finit par estimer approximativement à 30,000 hommes.

En même temps arrivaient de Moush, Erzeroum, Erzindjian, et Diarbékir des troupes que le témoin estime approximativement à 20,000 hommes.

Pendant dix jours encore, les Arméniens se soutinrent contre les Kurdes et les soldats; ne pouvant résister davantage une partie d'entre eux se rendirent et l'autre partie prit la fuite dans les montagnes.

Le témoin nie s'être servi d'une arme pendant ces vingt et un jours, étant indisposé, soit pendant leur fuite vers Antok Dagh, soit pendant qu'ils y séjournèrent, personne à sa connaissance n'est venu demander aux Arméniens les motifs de leur fuite, ni les engager à faire leur soumission. Seul le nommé Sako, membre du Conseil des Anciens de Chenik, pouvait donner les renseignements à cet égard.

Même, ajoute le témoin, ayant connaissance d'un ordre qui prescrivait de les tuer, les Arméniens n'osèrent envoyer aucun d'entre eux à l'autorité et essayèrent de faire partir dans le même but des femmes avec des enfants, auxquels les Kurdes et les autorités de Koulp ne permirent pas de passer.

3. Au sujet des massacres commis par les Kurdes et les troupes.

Les Arméniens en fuite furent massacrés plus par les troupes que par les Kurdes, qui s'attachaient de préférence au pillage de tout ce qu'ils trouvaient sous leurs mains.

Le témoin lui-même était parmi les fuyards avec les siens; ils gagnèrent le "Phelié Henquevi" (Ravin de Miel) où sept des membres de sa famille furent massacrés par les troupes; leurs cadavres y restèrent abandonnés.

Ayant pu atteindre, en compagnie de quinze personnes environ, la Montagne de Passour (Passour Dagh) il fut rejoint par les soldats, qui tuèrent sous ses yeux trois de ces Arméniens répondant aux noms de Mardo, Mardiros, Artin.

Le témoin Erko, lui-même, entouré par cinq soldats, fut blessé—il ne peut dire si c'est par un officier ou un soldat—à la joue droite, puis à la tête et en tombant reçut une troisième blessure dans le dos. Il resta caché pendant quinze jours sous une pierre où un enfant qui était avec lui, deux vieilles femmes Arméniennes venues de maisons non éloignées, lui apportaient du sel pour panser ses blessures et des noix, du blé bouilli pour se nourrir. Au bout de ce temps, découvert par les gendarmes, il fut amené à la bourgade de Passour même où il fut emprisonné et où il apprit de Kurdes que l'ordre était venu du Gouvernement que l'on ne tuerait plus personne. Rendu à la liberté il regagna Chenik où un "Mir-Alai" (Colonel) dont il ignore le nom, commandant les troupes campées près de Chenik, l'invita à reconstruire sa maison, ce à quoi il se refusa.

Plus tard, il vint à Moush. Les Arméniens qui s'étaient rendus aux troupes furent massacrés par elles, à ce que le témoin entendit raconter par les villageois de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan, et en particulier par les nommés Tavo, Moukhtar de Semal, et Ego, Khatib de Semal, et les cadavres des victimes enfouis dans une fosse à Ghelié-Guzan à ce que lui dirent les nommés Sako, membre du Conseil des Anciens, et Mikhail, Khatib de Chenik.

Tavo et Mikhail s'étant rendus à la fosse en question pour y chercher la dépouille mortelle d'un prêtre Arménien ne purent l'y retrouver.

Invité à préciser une date quelconque le témoin répond que simple berger, cela lui est impossible. Mais il sait qu'une partie des événements a eu lieu après le "Mariam Periz," Fête de l'Assomption 3 (15) Août, 1894.

État de la famille du témoin Erko. Elle se composait de seize personnes, dont sept ont été tuées aux cours des événements:—

1. Son frère Artin, âgé de 30 ans, avec deux fils: Vartan, âgé de 3 ans; Aram, âgé de 1 an.

2. La femme de son cousin Serkis, âgé de 35 ans, disparu et dont il ignore le sort; la nommée Mariam, âgée de 21 ans avec leurs trois filles: Chotchan, âgée de 6 ans; Awan, âgée de 3 ans, et une troisième dont il ignore le nom, âgée d'environ 1 an.

Le témoin a ajouté ensuite à ce nombre de seize, et parmi les morts, Bedros, fils de Gerkeis et de Mariam, âgé de 7 ans.

Les survivants sont au nombre de neuf, dont le témoin lui-même, Erko, et son frère Gourdjo, détenus tous deux en prison à Moush.

Son fils Girbo, sa bru Zeri, la femme de son frère Artin, Khatchik la femme de son frère Khaze, avec ses enfants Romé, Khazar, et Rebo, et qui se trouvent soit à Moush, soit dans le village d'Ogronk.

Dons forcés, exigés par les tribus Kurdes, des Arméniens, et connus sous le nom de "hafir."

Depuis de longues années les Arméniens sont, de père en fils, soumis à des Chefs Kurdes, qui leur disent, "Nous sommes vos Aghas," et qui les obligent à leur payer en argent, bestiaux, beurre, &c., un tribut qu'ils appellent "hafir." Les habitants des villages s'acquittent de cette contribution par l'intermédiaire de leurs Kiahias, Primats, Khatibs, et leur Conseil des Anciens, à l'égard des tribus Bakiranli, Badikanli, Khouchékanli, Kherzanli, et Khianli. Depuis deux ans ces deux derniers ne leur réclament plus rien par crainte des autorités auxquelles les villageois s'étaient plaints.

Interrogé pourquoi ils n'avaient pas fait la même démarche à l'encontre des trois premières tribus, il répond que leurs télégrammes, requêtes, &c., adressés à cet effet, pendant plusieurs années, sauf l'année dernière, sont restés sans résultat par suite de la mollesse des autorités.

En 1894, malgré la présence de troupes à Merguémouzan, ils payèrent aux Aghas Bakiranli, Omer, et Chero, £ T. 2, trente Moutons, cinq kilés de blé, cinq batmans de poil de chèvre.

En cas de refus, les Kurdes prélevaient cet impôt par la force.

Il résulte des autres déclarations du témoin Erko:—

(*a.*) Qu'il a pour compagnon de détention l'Agha des Kurdes Sassounlis Hichman, par lequel il a entendu dire, soit au village, soit à Moush en prison, que le dit Hichman avait reçu l'ordre d'un "Mir Alai" (Colonel) de se réunir aux autres Kurdes pour attaquer les Arméniens. Il a refusé et a été arrêté postérieurement.

Depuis deux ans, cet Aghá, par crainte des autorités, n'exigeait plus de "hafir" des villageois de Chenik.

(*b.*) Que les Cheiks Omer et Mehemed disposeraient d'une telle influence sur leurs tribus qu'elles ne se seraient jamais, sans leurs ordres, livrées aux actes racontés par le témoin.

(*c.*) Que les déclarations du frère du témoin Gourdjo, précédemment entendu et relatives aux habitudes des villageois se rendant chaque année à leur pâturage d'été (Yaila), sont confirmées.

(*d.*) Qu'il aurait entendu dire que les villages de Shatakh avaient été pillés mais non brûlés, par suite de la présence du Caïmacam nommé Salih Agha.

(*e.*) Qu'il n'aurait pas connaissance d'une Association (Chirket), qui, d'après son frère Gourdjo, l'aurait empêché un certain temps de venir à Moush.

Le témoin Erko, qui au cours de sa déposition recueillie par l'intermédiaire du nommé Setrak avait tour à tour déclaré qu'il avait vu, puisqu'il avait entendu dire que les Arméniens qui s'étaient rendus aux troupes avaient été massacrés, ayant été invité par l'entremise de Tateos Effendi à s'expliquer sur cette contradiction, a répondu en dernier lieu qu'il n'avait pas assisté à ce spectacle de ses propres yeux, mais qu'au reste on devait s'adresser aux gens de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan, qui sont au courant.

La déposition du témoin Erko est terminée.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. PRJVALSKY.
M. VILBERT.

Inclosure 15 in No. 288.

Procès-verbal No. 8 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 2, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires. Le témoin Erko, ayant, au cours de cette séance, soit expliqué, soit confirmé ses précédentes déclarations, il a paru indispensable aux Délégués Consulaires, pour l'intelligence des faits et la compréhension de l'ordre dans lequel se sont déroulés les événements, de fondre en un tout la déposition du témoin que présente dans son ensemble le Procès-verbal No. 7 de la séance du 1er Février dernier.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

No. 229.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 151. Confidential.)

Constantinople, March 6, 1895.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a Report which I have received from the Armenian Patriarch respecting the Sassoon massacres.

The most remarkable feature of this Report is that the Armenians are represented (perhaps from a desire to bring their heroic qualities into prominence) as having offered a more stubborn and effective resistance to the Kurds and Turkish soldiery than had hitherto been believed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 229.

Report by the Armenian Patriarch respecting the Sassoon Massacres.

(Traduction littérale.)

Le 21 Janvier (v. s.), 1895.

LE pays de Sassoun où se sont passés les faits tragiques qui occupent actuellement l'opinion publique en Europe est situé dans le Vilayet de Bitlis, formant une dépendance du Sandjak de Moush. Une distance de huit heures à dos de cheval vers le sud le sépare du chef-lieu du Sandjak (la ville de Mousli).

Par suite de la position montagneuse de Sassoun, les habitants n'avaient pas de relations suivies avec les villes et villages d'alentour; l'agriculture et l'élevage des moutons constituaient avec quelques métiers primitifs leurs moyens d'existence.

Le nombre des villages se trouvant dans le district de Sassoun est de 90 à 100, dont chacun contient, en moyenne, quarante maisons. En évaluant le nombre des habitants de chaque maison à vingt personnes, ce qui est bien au-dessous de la vérité, le nombre total des Arméniens de ce district s'élève à 70,000. Mais l'évaluation de vingt personnes par maison est bien faible, car suivant l'usage antique, encore en vigueur dans le pays, les descendants d'une famille ne font jamais ménage à part lors de leur mariage: aussi voit-on des cousins et des arrière-cousins réunis sous le même toit. Avant les massacres on comptait dans plusieurs familles de soixante jusqu'à soixante-dix membres.

Le district de Sassoun a huit subdivisions dont les noms suivent: Verine-Kavar, Kharzank, Sassoun proprement dit, Psanatz, Chadakh, Talorik, Khoulpe.

1. *Verine-Kavar.*—Quoique le terrain soit dans cette contrée très pierreux et accidenté, on y rencontre quelques belles prairies sur les plateaux de la montagne dite Montagne de la Sainte-Vierge (Sourpe Asdvadzadzine). Le mont appelé Sev-sur (la Montagne Noire) qui s'élève aux confins de ces prairies, sépare les districts de Khouth et de Pmachêne, qui pourraient aussi être considérés comme faisant partie du pays de Sassoun.

On trouve dans Verine-Kavar les villages suivants:—

Villages.	Maisons.	Habitants.
1. Kharopi	20	Arméniens et Kurdes mêlés.
2. Varantz	7	Arméniens.
3. Gorther	15	"
4. Khatcharenk	10	"
5. Ardjouik	15	"
6. Chigualeuk	15	"
7. Paler-Tzor	22	Arméniens et Kurdes.
8. Erour	23	" "
9. Rémgank	8	Arméniens.
10. Tzour	10	"
11. Rechnik	15	"
Et deux autres villages de moindre importance.		

2. *Kharzank.*—Le pays est rocheux et des plus accidentés; sur ses confins se trouve le Mont de Saint-Maratouk, où les habitants se transportent quand ils ont à prêter un serment.

On y compte les villages suivants:—

Villages.	Maisons.	Habitants.
1. Badrmoul	28	Arméniens et Kurdes mêlés.
2. Verine Tchalalek	25	" "
3. Nerkine Tchalalek	25	" "
4. Tchagour	20	" "
5. Tchomghpi	16	Arméniens.
6. Haghi	23	Arméniens et Kurdes.
7. Pertchinke	27	Arméniens.
8. Feghi	11	"
9. Herigank	18	"
10. Dergnith	22	"

Cette contrée contenait encore quelques villages avec une population mixte.

3. *Sassoun*, proprement dit, qui est situé sur le sommet d'une montagne à pic. Les villages qui s'y trouvent sont:—

Villages.	Maisons.	Habitants.
1. Medpank	20	Arméniens et Kurdes.
2. Dzargank	15	Arméniens.
3. Koghkih	12	"
4. Antzklank	10	"
5. Pevi	12	Arméniens et Kurdes.
6. Harigank	20	" "
7. Arguik	15	Arméniens.
8. Khan	13	"
9. Kachekecheuk	18	"
10. Petank	10	"
11. Magheuk	14	"
12. Gonk	25	"
13. Mezren	15	"
14. Hartchouk	17	"

Quelques autres villages qui se trouvent dans cette contrée sont de très peu d'importance.

4. *Psanatz* est célèbre par la fertilité extraordinaire de ses plaines.

On y rencontre les villages suivants :—

Villages.	Maisons.	Habitants.
1. Mechkugh	25	Arméniens.
2. Djermik	20	"
3. Khentzorik	24	"
4. Plajink	20	"
5. Talin	20	"
6. Pichoud	14	"
7. Tarouk	12	"
8. Hadjink	16	"
9. Psank	15	"
10. Gorngèze	16	"
11. Tatank	22	"
12. Havgonk	18	"
Et quelques autres villages.		

5. *Chadakh.*—La plus riche partie du district de Sassoun. Elle est d'une luxuriante végétation ; ses prairies se trouvent au pied des Monts d'Andok et de Kéjune, qui ont été le théâtre des premiers massacres. C'est dans les défilés du Mont d'Andok que s'était réfugiée une partie des habitants de Sassoun. C'est là qu'ils ont été assassinés en défendant leur vie et leur honneur.

Les principaux villages sont :—

Villages.	Maisons.	Habitants.
1. Chenek	80	Arméniens.
2. Semal	70	"
3. Algantz	35	"
4. Gleygouzum	120	"
5. Khedan	14	"
6. Aghpi	95	"
7. Hitenk	30	"
8. Guermor	25	"
9. Kop	28	"
10. Dapek	30	Arméniens and Kurdes.
11. Yeritzank	12	Arméniens.
12. Chouchumerg	25	"
13. Keghachen	20	"
Et quelques autres villages d'importance moindre.		

6. *Dalvorik* (*Talori*).—La partie dont la population est la plus dense. Sa configuration est très pittoresque : une chaîne de montagnes, dans les défilés desquels on rencontre plusieurs précipices, passe dans le pays. Le rocher de Ferfer où des centaines d'habitants des deux sexes et de tout âge ont perdu leur vie, est situé derrière le village Pourkh. Sur le fleuve de Pré-Batman, dans la partie orientale de la contrée, se trouve le Pont de Sadan (Pont du Diable) dont les localités environnantes ont été le théâtre des plus atroces crimes lors des massacres.

Les villages de Dalvorik dont les noms suivent sont habités exclusivement par les Arméniens :—

Villages.	Maisons.
1. Dalvorik	25
2. Hekmank	20
3. Helogheuk	30
4. Dombenk	22
5. Pourkh	30
6. Khel-Hovide	16
7. Kertzmank	20
8. Hosmoud	15
9. Haetk	21
10. Sebghank	16
11. Yeghgath	20
12. Arikhon	12
13. Kourikhon	12
14. Mezren	12
Et quelques autres villages.	

7 et 8. *Khoulpe et Khlin.*—Pays très fertile ; c'est la partie la plus florissante du district au point de vue de la propagation de l'instruction publique ; plusieurs écoles y ont été fondées par les éphores des églises et par les Sociétés Unies Arméniennes.

Les villages de ces deux contrées qui sont habités exclusivement par les Arméniens, sont :—

Villages.	Maisons.
1. Pèrga	400
2. Ahronk	200
3. Keghervan	100
4. Saghidoun	80
5. Engounenk	40
6. Galoyguemar	20
7. Gleymsour	24
8. Sevik	20
9. Tchekhentzor	70
10. Arklionk	25
11. Pirme	180
12. Patzon	40
13. Meydenk	30
14. Hahmedank	100
15. Chouchik	70
16. Ardejonk	50
17. Ehoub	35
18. Gampenine	40
19. Khodzadz-vank	30
20. Gremouri	35
21. Chouchumerg	32
22. Tzerer	25
23. Hartikhon	28
24. Arès	20
25. Mezren, dans la contrée de Khoulpe	25
26. Mezren, dans la contrée de Khlin	20

Ces deux contrées contiennent encore quelques autres villages de moindre importance.

Dans la contrée entourant Sassoun vivent plusieurs tribus Kurdes (Achirets) originaires de Sassoun, de Belek, et de Pozek. Les Chefs de ces tribus ont de tout temps exercé une domination directe sur les Arméniens et ont prélevé des impôts dits impôts de "khafirat" (impôts de mécréants).

Les Arméniens étaient donc obligés de payer ces impôts outre ceux établis par le Gouvernement Ottoman, qu'ils payaient très régulièrement.

Dans ces dernières années, par suite de la formation des troupes de cavalerie Hamidié, les exactions des Kurdes sont arrivées au point de devenir tout à fait insupportables. D'autre part, le Gouvernement Ottoman, par la sévérité qu'il mettait dans la perception des impôts, rendait la situation intenable.

Les Arméniens de Sassoun s'étant dernièrement trouvés dans l'obligation de débourser le triple, et même le quadruple, des impôts établis par le Gouvernement par suite des exactions des Kurdes, ont dû retarder le paiement des impôts Gouvernementaux.

Cette attitude prise par les Arméniens pouvait être interprétée tout au plus comme une protestation contre le manque absolu de protection de la part des autorités locales, protection qui était certainement due à cette population sédentaire, très tranquille, contre les hordes barbares, toujours en état d'insurrection, et ne payant aucun impôt.

Le Gouvernement local n'a pas voulu comprendre que le retard apporté dans le paiement des impôts était la conséquence naturelle d'un état de choses anormal qui nécessitait son intervention en faveur des Arméniens. Il a voulu interpréter ce fait comme un acte de rébellion manifeste ; d'autant plus, qu'il avait l'intention arrêtée depuis de longues années de disperser cette réunion compacte de montagnards Arméniens.

Aussi, après quelques tentatives sans succès a-t-on envoyé de Moush une troupe de 300 gendarmes réguliers, avec la mission de percevoir les impôts dûs. Cette troupe était conduite par des Kurdes qui avaient une connaissance parfaite de la configuration du pays, des passages, et des défilés des montagnes.

Cette troupe est arrivée dans le pays vers le 10 Juin (v. s.), 1894, et y a commis les excès les plus révoltants—excès qui ont provoqué une résistance naturelle de la part de quelques habitants du village Tchekhentzor.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Les Kurdes ont mis le comble à leurs déprédations en mettant à sac le village de Chenik, d'où ils ont amené les troupeaux dans leurs montagnes.

Pour obtenir justice les villageois se sont adressés au Major Ahmed Bey, Commandant de la troupe des gendarmes, mais celui-ci, loin d'envoyer des troupes à la poursuite des Kurdes qui venaient de piller tout un village, comme c'était là son devoir, fait aux Arméniens un accueil des plus outrageants et profère contre eux des menaces de toute sorte en prenant ouvertement fait et cause pour les Kurdes, dont il approuvait les méfaits.

Cette conduite du Major Ahmed Bey désespère les Arméniens de toute protection de la part des fonctionnaires du Gouvernement. Dans leur exaspération, ils décident de reprendre eux-mêmes les troupeaux qui leur avaient été enlevés par les Kurdes et ils y réussissent, après une rencontre sanglante avec les pillards. Il est actuellement prouvé que le Gouvernement n'attendait qu'un incident pareil pour commencer à mettre à exécution son plan dès longtemps arrêté.

Dès que le succès des Arméniens fut connu Ahmed Bey se hâta de télégraphier à Bitlis, Erzeroum, Guindj, et Diarbékir, demandant l'envoi immédiat d'une force militaire suffisante et annonçant la conduite des Arméniens comme une révolte ouvertement déclarée.

Il invite en même temps les tribus sauvages des environs, ainsi que des gendarmes de Moush, à se constituer en un corps afin de marcher contre les Arméniens.

Ainsi une force composée de Kurdes et de gendarmes se forma rapidement et marcha sur le village de Chenik, avant l'arrivée des troupes parties d'Erzeroum, de Guindj, &c. Les Kurdes de Sénal, de Ghelié-Gouzan, et des environs ne tardèrent pas à les suivre.

Pendant plusieurs jours les Arméniens ont eu à opposer résistance aux assauts donnés par les Kurdes, lorsque des troupes régulières arrivèrent le 9 Août de Bitlis et le 20 Août de Guindj avec des batteries de montagne; mais la conduite d'Ahmed Bey avait déjà soulevé tous les habitants du district. Aussi les troupes arrivées se trouvèrent-elles en nombre insuffisant pour réduire les Arméniens qui, par des efforts surhumains et au prix de la vie de plusieurs d'entre eux, avaient réussi à garder leurs positions.

Cet insuccès obligea le Gouvernement à chercher d'obtenir par la ruse ce qu'il n'avait pu faire par la force. Il feignit accepter une réconciliation et leur a persuadé de se désarmer. C'est après avoir amuséné les Arméniens à mettre bas leurs armes que les troupes tant régulières qu'irrégulières se sont ruées sur les Arméniens sans défense et les ont passés au fil de l'épée, n'épargnant ni les vieillards, ni les enfants, ni les femmes, auxquelles ils ont fait subir les derniers outrages.

Après avoir massacré les habitants de Chenik les troupes régulières, aidées par les Kurdes, s'avancent vers Talori, centre du district de Sassoun, qui par sa position même avait fixé l'attention dès le début de ces troubles.

Elles ont saccagé et incendié les villages se trouvant sur leur passage, commettant les atrocités les plus horribles sur les habitants.

Après ces méfaits la force armée est venue mettre le siége autour de Dalvorik et cerner le Mont Andok.

Les troupes arrivées de Diarbékir ont occupé le Mont de Saint-Maratouk et les rives du Jac Dzovassar avec les achirets de Khoulpe. Celles arrivées de Guindj ont occupé les défilés du pic de Ferfer et de Sbidak-Sar, pendant que les achirets de Zeylan prenaient position dans les défilés du Mont Taurus, et enfin les issues du Mont d'Andok et celles du Mont Sourpe Agop étaient gardées par les troupes arrivées de Moush.

Cette force armée formait ainsi une ceinture autour de Sassoun où devait s'accomplir un massacre général.

Les Arméniens de Talori et d'Andok s'étaient aperçus du danger qui les menaçaient en présence de ce déploiement de forces, les habitants des villages de Pourkh, Heloghenk, Donaleuk, Hokmank, Sebghnak, Khel-Novide, Artkhor, Kourakhon, Eghgath, Hartket Mezren, ainsi que les réfugiés de Chenik, de Semal, et de quelques autres villages se préparaient à leur opposer une résistance désespérée, quoiqu'ils ne fussent armés que de quelques vieux fusils, de pelles, et de pioches.

Le nommé Mourad, qui était à la tête de ces villageois, s'est retiré avec les siens à Talorik pendant que Kirko Movsessian, originaire de Chenik, lequel indigné par les procédés des fonctionnaires avait le premier poussé ses compatriotes à la résistance et à défendre en mourant leur vie et leur honneur, se transporta à son tour avec ses compagnons, et suivi par les habitants de quelques villages de l'alentour sur le Mont Andok, pour en occuper les défilés. En même temps il envoya une partie de ses compagnons occuper le passage aboutissant à Talorik, lequel s'étend vers le village Ghelié-Gouzan d'un parcours de sept heures.

C'est pourquoi les troupes régulières et irrégulières se sont heurtées en même temps à la résistance des Arméniens sur deux points différents, c'est-à-dire à Dalvorik et à Andok.

Les Kurdes de Sassoun, de Khouth, de Belek, et de Khouti ont mis à profit l'état d'anarchie créé dans ces pays pour se livrer aux actes les plus barbares. Le pillage, le viol, le massacre ont marqué leur passage. Les villages de Mamik, Cofosik, Havadorik, et d'autres encore ont été mis sens dessus dessous.

On a augmenté successivement les forces dirigées contre les Arméniens. Le nombre de ces forces a fini par s'élever à 3,000 soldats. Quant aux pièces de montagne, il y en avait vingt et une. Les garnisons de Moush, d'Erzindjian, de Van, de Bitlis, de Diarbékir, de Bagdad, et de Damas avaient chacune fourni son contingent.

Le Muchir, Zéki Pacha, Commandant-en-chef du 4e Corps d'Armée, avait été placé à la tête de ce corps qui a opéré à Sassoun.

La population désarmée ne s'était nullement préparée à cette attaque, qui a eu lieu avec une fureur inconcevable; la canonnade a continuée pendant plusieurs jours. La famine s'est vivement fait sentir. La situation était vraiment insupportable. Pourtant les montagnards de Sassoun continuaient à tenir tête.

Hélas, le Muchir, Zéki Pacha, s'est de nouveau adressé à la ruse pour en finir avec les Arméniens. C'est à la suite des promesses mensongères de son Excellence que les assiégés d'Andok et de Dalorik ont capitulé, se fiant à la justice du Gouvernement Impérial.

Ce qui s'est passé à la suite de cette capitulation est vraiment atroce.

Le massacre a recommencé avec une fureur inouïe; plusieurs villages ont été incendiés et leurs habitants tués après toute sorte de mauvais traitements et de tortures. Les jeunes femmes et les vierges ont été outragées et plusieurs d'entre elles, ainsi que des adolescents et des adultes, ont été conduits à l'esclavage.

Comme un exemple de la cruauté avec laquelle les troupes régulières et les Kurdes ont agi il suffit de citer que plus de soixante adolescents ont été enterrés vivants au pied du Mont Andok dans une fosse que leurs bourreaux ont spécialement creusée pour eux.

Les pauvres femmes et les enfants qui s'étaient réfugiés dans l'église de Dalorik ont été passés au fil de l'épée. Des torrents de sang ont coulé dans ce village, qui présente actuellement le spectacle désolant d'une masse de cadavres humains et de ruines.

En présence de cette fureur des vieillards, des femmes, et des enfants se sont volontairement donnés la mort en se précipitant des montagnes à Dalorik pour ne pas tomber entre les mains de l'ennemi.

Entre des milliers de morts nous pouvons citer le prêtre Der-Ohannès, de Sémal, qui a été écorché et dont les yeux ont été poché.

Ce pauvre prêtre a trouvé la mort sous ces horribles tortures. De même la force armée a massacré en les torturant le prélat Meguerditch de Tchekhentzer, le prêtre Der-Garabete avec cinq de ses compagnons, le sieur Kirko Movsésian, l'héroïque défenseur de Chénik et d'Andok; le prêtre Der-Bedross Der-Ghazarian de Ghelié-Gouzan; le nommé Khetcho, Moukhtar du village d'Aghpi; son frère Hebo et leurs enfants, le prêtre Der-Kopriél, du village Pourkh; et le Sieur Vartan Der-Meguerditchian.

Des milliers d'autres personnes dont il est impossible d'énumérer ici les noms sont morts comme ces pauvres martyrs, sous d'horribles tortures.

Le nombre total des morts s'élève de 5,500 à 6,000 personnes. Il y a plus de 1,000 blessés, dont la grande partie est également morte par suite de manque de soin, tandis que 250 personnes ont tombées entre les mains des assiégeants comme esclaves.

Voici la liste des villages dont plusieurs sont totalement et quelques-uns en partie ruinés:—

Villages.	Maisons.
1. Dalorik	25
2. Hadk	21
3. Yeghgath	25
4. Pourkh	20
5. Sevghank	16
6. Ahronk	200
7. Keghevan	100
8. Hiteuk	30
9. Khelhovid	16
10. Khelleh	80
11. Sénal	70
12. Kope	26
13. Keghachène	20

	Villages.	Maisons.
14.	Eritzank	12
15.	Chouchnamerg	25
16.	Ghelié-Gouzon	120
17.	Tchelkentzer	70
18.	Alyantz	35
19.	Chermno	25
20.	Dapek	30
21.	Aglipi	95
22.	Heloghek	30

Soit, 22 villages contenant 1,088 maisons.

C'est par de tels événements tragiques que le district de Sassoun, jadis si florissant, a été voué à la ruine. Le spectacle que présente actuellement ce pauvre pays suffirait à lui seul à prouver les cruautés et les atrocités commises.

No. 230.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 152.)
Pera, March 6, 1895.

My Lord,

MR. LONGWORTH having mentioned in his despatch No. 12 of the 25th January, transmitted to your Lordship in my despatch No. 87 of the 4th February, that the instructions given to Zeki Pasha respecting Sassoon were communicated to the Governor of Trebizond, and were to the effect that the insurrection should be suppressed with as little bloodshed as possible, I requested him to report fully on the matter, and have now the honour to inclose his reply.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 230.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Trebizond, February 18, 1895.

Sir,

IN answer to your Excellency's despatch of the 4th instant, I have to report that no fuller information can be obtained here as regards the instructions given to Zeki Pasha.

My informant was the Vali himself, who is now extremely reticent on the subject. Being by nature incredulous, I questioned him closely at the time, but he succeeded in assuring me it was true.

If he deceived me, then it will be certainly the first time, to my knowledge.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 231.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 12.)

(No. 83.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 12, 1895, 10·45 A.M.*

WITH reference to my telegram to your Lordship No. 77, the Porte will not consent to a Dragoman proceeding to Moush. We, however, maintain that it is our right to send a Dragoman, and are insisting that the Turkish Government should afford him the necessary facilities for travelling.

No. 232.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 26.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March 12, 1895.*

I HAVE received your telegram No. 83 of to-day, and I entirely approve the attitude assumed by your Excellency in concert with your French and Russian colleagues with regard to the dispatch of a Dragoman to Moush.

All requisite assistance should be furnished to the Delegates to insure the proper performance of their duties, and Her Majesty's Government must insist on every facility being given by the Porte with that object. Otherwise, the investigation becomes illusory, and an universal feeling of indignation in this country will be the result.

If the Turkish Government persist in withholding their consent, Her Majesty's Government may find it necessary to send Her Majesty's Consul from Erzeroum, accompanied by a full staff of assistants to the spot.

No. 233.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 106.)
Foreign Office, March 12, 1895.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 95 of the 6th instant, I transmit herewith, for your Excellency's information, copies of a further article, which appeared in the "Daily Telegraph" of yesterday, relative to the Sassoon massacres.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 234.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 110.)
Foreign Office, March 12, 1895.

Sir,

I HAVE received your despatch No. 126 of the 20th ultimo relative to the arrest and imprisonment of a number of Armenians on account of the collection of money for the relief of their relatives in the Dersim, which has been represented to the authorities as a contribution to the funds of a revolutionary Committee.

I request your Excellency to bring the matter to the notice of the Turkish Government, if you have not already done so, and to remonstrate strongly against the injustice and severity with which these unfortunate people have been treated.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 235.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 14.)

(No. 84.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 14, 1895, 10·10 P.M.*

IN accordance with your Lordship's telegram No. 26, I yesterday informed the Grand Vizier that you had instructed me to send Mr. Graves and his staff to Moush, if the Sultan maintained his refusal as to the Armenian Dragoman. His Imperial Majesty persists in this refusal, and has repeatedly sent a Secretary with remonstrances to my Russian and French colleagues, but not to me.

I have telegraphed to Mr. Graves to apply to the Vali for an escort for himself to proceed to Moush.

* "Daily Telegraph," March 11, 1895.

No. 236.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 14.)

(No. 85. Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 14, 1895, 10·40 P.M.*

GRAVES informs me that the Italian Consul and the correspondent of the "Daily News" have taken the evidence of a Turkish soldier belonging to one of the regiments concerned in the massacres.

The soldier stated that the massacre of the unresisting villagers by the troops went on for several nights, and confirms the accounts already given of the death-trench at Ghelié-Guzan.

The evidence has been sent to the Delegates. It will also appear in the "Daily News," but, in order to avoid any possible danger to the witness, the correspondent will disguise the name of the town in which the evidence was given.

No. 237.

Memorandum by Mr. Lynch towards an Outline of a Scheme for the better Government of the Armenian Provinces of the Turkish Empire.—(Received March 15.)

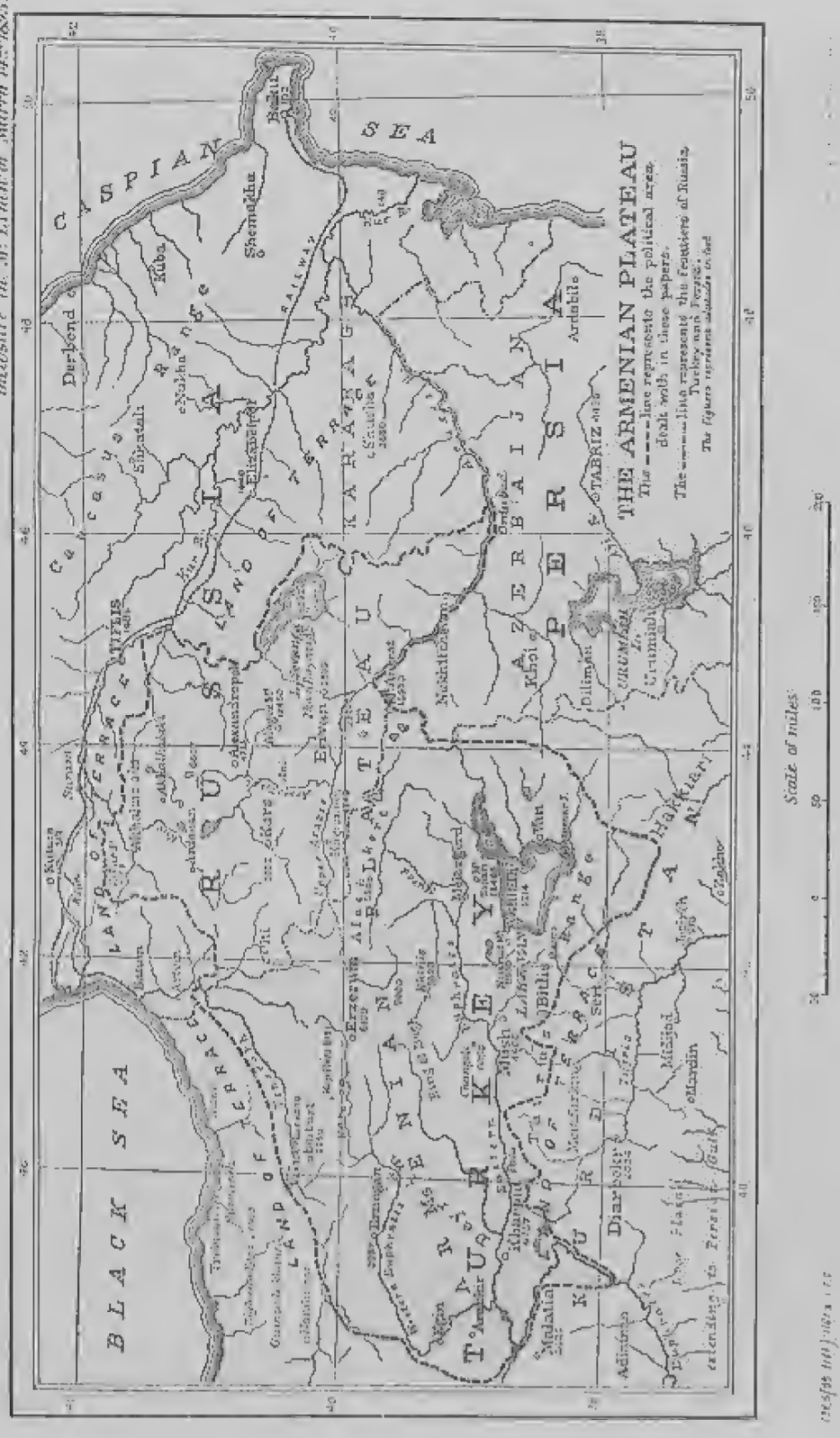
1. IN any scheme, short of an occupation of the country by a strong military Power, the principle of *delimiting a manageable area* is, in my opinion, of cardinal importance. Our experience in Asia Minor subsequent to the Berlin Treaty and the Cyprus Convention, and especially while Mr. Goschen was Ambassador to the Porte, may well warrant us in doubting whether we should be able to carry reforms extending over the whole of Asia Minor and Armenia; yet the Armenians form a considerable portion of the population in the townships west of the Euphrates, their villages are found in the most remote and inaccessible regions between the town of Diabekir and the Lake of Van, and even the rugged chain of the Cilician Taurus is peopled by mountaineers of Armenian race. Even if we were able to adapt these reforms to the various local conditions, and to get them passed into law and practice, it is open to doubt whether a foundation could be given to them sufficiently stable to insure their permanence and their development. At all events, in dealing with the Armenian question, this is not the way to begin; and I cannot help attributing a great share in our failure after the Berlin Treaty to the fact that we proceeded in this discursive manner without concentration of aims. (Reference to "Armenian Question," pamphlet sent herewith, pp. 8-10.)

2. The provinces in which the Armenian question is most acute, and where the agitation is supported by the most substantial causes, are the provinces inhabited by the Armenians and the tribal Kurds. In those provinces an intolerable political situation exists. It is true that this situation is of long standing. I cannot see that the state of these provinces is worse now than at many other periods during our acquaintance with them. Indeed it could not well be worse. But the example of European Turkey, and the gradual flow of Western thought and influence towards the East, have raised hopes in the breasts of these unfortunate people, and the proximity of the Russian border has given a new and growing importance to the country in which they live.

It was one of the principal objects of my recent journey to examine whether in the countries which bear the loose geographical designation of Armenia there existed any area of a homogeneous nature for broad political and administrative purposes, and, if so, what the limits of such an area might be taken to be.

On pp. 10-14 of the pamphlet which accompanies this Memorandum will be found a description of the general features of the Armenian country. It will be seen that a distinction is there drawn between the table-land of Armenia and the zones of mountain ranges which lead down from it to the Black Sea and the trough of the Kur River on the north, and to the plains of Mesopotamia on the south.

This distinction is of great importance for political and administrative purposes, and should be kept clearly in view. It is worked out for the Turkish provinces of Armenia on pp. 39-43 of the pamphlet, but necessarily only in a general manner. In the map which accompanies the pamphlet, the area marked with black bars corresponds in a very general manner with the geographical extension of the Armenian plateau. Within Turkish territory I have filled in the area in colour.



I venture to think that this is no pedantic distinction. The zone of mountains which lead down like terraces from the plateau to the plains of Mesopotamia, and which form the true Kurdistan, is in every sense a different country from the table-land. "The problems which are presented to a Governor on the plateau by reason of the difference in religion and in the habits of the peoples over whom he is called to rule are quite sufficient to absorb his attention without the addition to his jurisdiction of districts which, if Russia were mistress of the country, would be constituted into a Military Government, and subjected to military law." (Page 43.)

The superficial measurement of the area covered in colour on the map is about 42,000 square miles. It is well capable of being governed from a single centre.

That area, well administered, would form a pale into which the Armenians of the outlying districts could emigrate. Its population is at present absurdly small, and it is capable of supporting many times as many people as now inhabit it.

3. Upon these general principles, but in a more thorough manner, the limits of the new province should be drawn by a small Commission appointed for the purpose.

4. The province should be cut off from the Palace system at Constantinople, by which I mean that the present system of choosing Pashas should no longer apply to it, and that the revenues of the province should in the first place be devoted to its administration.

(Signed) H. F. B. LYNCH.

March 14, 1895.

Annex.

Map of the Armenian Plateau.

No. 238.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 88.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 16, 1895, 11 A.M.

MY telegram No. 84 of the 14th instant.

Mr. Graves telegraphed yesterday that he had made an official application in writing to the Vali to grant him and his Dragoman facilities and an escort for their journey to Moush. He informed him that they were starting at once, giving the reasons that I had indicated to him in a telegram. The Governor-General has referred this request of Mr. Graves to the Porte. Mr. Graves proposes to send his Dragoman to-day to inform the Vali verbally that, escort or no escort, he will start on Monday.

No. 239.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 89.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 16, 1895, 7 P.M.

MY colleagues have as yet no instructions as to sending their Consuls to Moush, but they consider that if the Sultan persists in his refusal about the dispatch of the Dragoman, the only possible solutions of the situation are either withdrawal from the Commission or else the dispatch of their Consuls with their staffs to Moush.

Said Pasha has not yet persuaded the Sultan to give way, but is still trying to do so.

Your Lordship's telegram No. 26 of the 12th instant has enabled me to take the lead in forcing on a solution of the question, and Mr. Graves' threat of starting on Monday will probably have the effect of making the Sultan yield.

No. 240.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 90.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 16, 1895, 2·45 P.M.

MY despatch No. 151 of the 6th instant.

The Armenian Patriarch communicated to the Sublime Porte a translation of the Report of the Archbishop of Erzeroum on the Sassoon incident, which was inclosed in my despatch above referred to.

His Beatitude, in reply, received an official letter to the effect that he should not interfere in politics, but confine his attention to religious matters.

The Armenian Lay Council have decided to send a formal reply to this letter, maintaining that the Patriarch has the right to concern himself with all the affairs of his community, religious and otherwise.

No. 241.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 27.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March* 16, 1895.

I HAVE received your telegrams Nos. 88 and 89 of to-day, relative to the refusal of the Sultan to sanction the dispatch of a Dragoman to Moush to assist the Delegates on the Bitlis Commission.

I approve your Excellency's action in the matter, and have urged the Governments of France and Russia to instruct their Ambassadors at Constantinople in a similar sense.

No. 242.

*The Earl of Kimberley to the Marquis of Dufferin.**

(No. 9.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March* 16, 189.

YOUR Excellency will have learnt from the telegrams repeated to you from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople that the three European Delegates on the Sassoon Commission are in great need of a Dragoman with a knowledge of Armenian and Kurdish, whose presence would inspire the witnesses with confidence, and help to establish the truth of the facts now under investigation.

The Porte has been requested by the three Ambassadors at Constantinople to give facilities for a Dragoman selected by the Consular Representatives at Erzeroum to go for the purpose to Moush.

Permission having been refused by the Sultan, Sir P. Currie has been instructed to insist that, if the necessary leave is not given, Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, accompanied by a full staff, shall proceed in person to Moush. Mr. Graves has accordingly requested the Governor-General of Erzeroum to furnish an escort and facilities to enable him and his Dragoman to start on the 18th instant.

If the Sultan persists in his refusal, the Ambassadors are of opinion that there will be no alternative but to withdraw from the Commission or to dispatch the Consuls and their staff to the spot. Your Excellency should urge the French Government to send telegraphic instructions to their Ambassador similar to those which have been sent to Sir P. Currie.

There is a risk of the inquiry entirely collapsing unless the three Powers show an united front.

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* Also to Sir F. Lascelles (No. 22)

No. 243.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 114.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 16, 1895.

ATTENTION has been called on several recent occasions, both in Parliament and in the public press, to the great number of Armenians and other Christian subjects of the Sultan who have been arrested on suspicion of political or other offences, and who are detained for an indefinite time without trial, being thus subjected to long terms of imprisonment without the opportunity of proving their innocence.

Your Excellency reported, at the end of last month, the arrest of some eighty Armenians in Constantinople on no more serious charge than the collection of subscriptions for the relief of those who had suffered from the occurrences in the Sassoon district. A certain number of these have been released, but the despatches from Her Majesty's Consular officers, forwarded by you to this Office, contain frequent reports of wholesale arrests made on grounds which appear to be altogether insufficient, of prolonged imprisonment of persons thus arrested without investigation of the charges against them, and too often of their eventual condemnation to severe penalties on evidence which cannot be regarded as conclusive.

Such sentences are no doubt from time to time reversed upon revision at Constantinople, or by the merciful intervention of His Majesty the Sultan, but the accused have in the meanwhile suffered grave injustice, and the most shocking reports have on many occasions been received of the treatment to which they are subjected while in prison. Indeed, the state of the prisons themselves appears in some cases to be such as to make mere confinement in them a punishment little short of torture.

Her Majesty's Government are confident that these proceedings are contrary to the wishes and intentions of His Majesty the Sultan and his Ministers, both on grounds of humanity and because of the feelings of resentment and discontent which they must produce among the Sultan's Christian subjects. But they are still further to be regretted as tending necessarily to strengthen the impression that the Porte is failing to act up to the engagements contracted by it under the LXIst Article of the Treaty of Berlin, and that the intervention of the Powers is called for to secure the observance of those engagements.

I request your Excellency to call the serious attention of the Turkish Ministers to this latter aspect of the question, and to the suggestions that have already been made in various quarters for some joint supervision by the foreign Consuls of the trials of Christians imprisoned on suspicion. Her Majesty's Government have for the present refrained from making proposals of this nature to the other Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, but they would earnestly press that instructions should be sent to restrain the provincial authorities from making indiscriminate arrests, and that arrangements should be made for a speedy and impartial investigation of the charges against persons now detained, and for the liberation of those against whom no substantial evidence can be produced.

I leave it to your Excellency's discretion to make this representation either in a note, or by communicating to the Turkish Government a copy of this despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 244.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 17.)

(No. 91.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 17, 1895, 3·10 P.M.

YOUR Lordship's telegram No. 26 of the 12th March.

As an alternative to the dispatch of a Dragoman from Erzeroum, the Porte this morning proposed that the Delegates should select Dragomans at Monsh in conjunction with the Turkish Commissioners. We have informed the Porte that we cannot accept this proposal, and have sent a joint telegram to our Consuls to dispatch the Dragoman. If the Turkish authorities refuse to grant him the necessary facilities, and an escort, the Consuls are themselves to make the necessary arrangements for his journey and safety.

We shall inform the Porte that in case of any accident to the Dragoman we shall hold them responsible.

I have telegraphed to Mr. Graves that, under these circumstances, he need not start for Moush.

No. 245.

Consul Stevens to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 15.)
My Lord, *Batoum, February 26, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that Mgr. Krimian, Catholicos of all the Armenians, accompanied by several Bishops and Archimandrites, arrived here from Tiflis on the 19th instant, and has been spending the past week among his flock at Batoum.

His Eminence and suite sailed to-day on board the regular mail-boat "Constantine" for Novorossisk, *en route* to Nahichevan-on-Don, on a visit to the Armenian community of that town, where, it is stated, the Catholicos will remain pending the receipt of permission to visit St. Petersburgh.

It would appear that the Catholicos is anxious to proceed to the Russian capital with the object of soliciting the support and intervention of the Russian Government on behalf of his co-religionists in Asia Minor.

Reports are current, however, to the effect that his Eminence, when recently at Tiflis, requested to be favoured with a personal interview with His Imperial Majesty, but that he was informed that the present was not an opportune moment for an audience to be granted him; he nevertheless entertains the hope that this decision may be reconsidered before the conclusion of his visit to Nahichevan-on-Don.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

No. 246.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 153.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 7, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond regarding the release of prisoners at Sivas.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 246.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February 25, 1895.*

THE following is an extract of Dr. Jewett's letter from Sivas, dated the 19th instant:—

"On the Sultan's birthday fifty-seven prisoners, who had served two-thirds of their sentences for various crimes, including three or four Armenians, were released. Two Armenian political prisoners who had acted as informers, and in whose possession revolutionary papers, seals, ammunition, &c., were found, have also been released. The compromising papers, &c., were probably put in their house by Armenians out of revenge. These two Armenians had been playing that game on other Armenians, and it was played on them. One of them tells an interesting story of having been taken by soldiers to the Vali's house one night about midnight. The Vali said he had an order to hang him, and told him to confess that the Archbishop and other high Armenians were revolutionists. He said he could not say so. He says he was taken out towards the gallows, became unconscious from fear, and then was returned to prison.

"Fifty to sixty Armenians of Tokat who were arrested in the political disturbances following the robbery of the post have been released.

"I think fourteen were not released. . . . . "

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 247.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 154.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 7, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, announcing the return from Erzinghian for Constantinople of Vehbi Pasha, Aide-de-camp to the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 247.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Trebizond, February 25, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the Sultan's Aide-de-camp, Major-General Vehbi Pasha, who was the bearer of a high decoration for Field-Marshal Zekki Pasha, as well as a richly embroidered standard for the Kurdish auxiliary troops, returned here yesterday on his way to Constantinople, after remaining some ten weeks at Erzinghian.

The cause of his protracted stay there in the fulfilment of so simple a mission is not known at Trebizond, however much it may be suspected by some Armenians, that the task secretly intrusted to him was to deprive Zekki Pasha of all documentary evidence tending to show that his line of action in the Sassoon disturbances was dictated by those at the head of the State.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 248.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 162. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 13, 1895.*

I INCLOSE, for your Lordship's information, an analysis of a list, which has been communicated to me by the Armenian Patriarchate, of the political prisoners now detained in the various towns of Asia Minor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 248.

Memorandum.

THE list furnished by the Armenian Patriarch contains the names of 39 priests and 722 laymen in prison or exile for political offences. The names include the Metropolitans of Zeitoun, Moosh, Kemakh, Hajjin Amhkir, Boulanek, Adana, and the Superiors of the convents of Fernouz and Arakelotz, near Moosh, the first three being in prison, the rest in exile; 7 Archimandrites, of whom 3 are in exile and 4 in prison; 21 priests.

There are 627 lay prisoners. The largest number are detained in the Vilayet of Sivas. The Patriarch reckons 213 as a minimum for this district, but cannot give the names of 100 of the prisoners (30 at least in the town of Sivas; 45 at Shabin Kara-Hissar; 28 at Tokat; 110 at Marsovan and Amasia). The other principal figures are 75 at Erzeroum, 66 at Erzinjan, 34 at Van, 35 at Bitlis and Moosh, 9 at Diarbekir, 15 at Kharpout, 55 (mostly unnamed) at Trebizond, 48 at Aleppo, 28 in the central prison of Constantinople.

There are 94 lay exiles in all, 66 of whom are at St. Jean d'Acre, 7 at Payas, 13 at Tripoli in Barbary, and 6 at Konieh.

The Patriarch adds that, owing to the difficulty of communicating with the interior, his list may be defective, and also that some of the persons mentioned may have been released without his knowledge.

March 13, 1895.

No. 249.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 59.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 13, 1895.

IN the course of conversation with Prince Lobanoff yesterday, I told his Excellency that I saw from the telegrams, which your Lordship had done me the honour to communicate to me, that the Bitlis Commission was not proceeding as satisfactorily as could be wished.

His Excellency replied that he had never entertained much hope of a satisfactory result, and he doubted whether the perpetrators of the Sassoon massacres would be brought to justice. His experience at Constantinople had taught him that the Turkish authorities, either by threats or promises, which it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to prove, could prevent damaging evidence from being given. In his opinion, however, the most important question to be considered was what was to be done when the Commission should have concluded its labours. His Excellency had been glad to learn from M. de Nélidoff that he had already been in consultation with Sir Philip Currie on the subject, and he sincerely hoped that some practical suggestion would be made.

I said that I appreciated the difficulty of the question, as I quite understood that Russia could not desire that the question of the independence of Armenia should be raised; and, on the other hand, the introduction of reforms into Armenia could scarcely be carried out without something more than diplomatic action, unless, indeed, the Porte agreed to introduce reforms, and authorized the Consuls of the Powers to watch over their execution.

His Excellency said that it was evident that something must be done, but it was not easy to suggest any course which would not be open to objection. He also observed that the Armenian Committees in England and elsewhere, which were of a purely political character, were showing great activity.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 250.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 92.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 18, 1895, 2·35 P.M.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding telegram, the Porte have now consented to the dispatch of the Dragoman to Moosh, and have instructed the Vali of Erzeroum to grant the necessary facilities for his journey.

No. 251.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 93.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 18, 1895, 8 P.M.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that Mr. Shipley, acting in accord with his colleagues, has reported to me that on the 18th instant the Commission informed the Delegates that, as the examination of Mourad and his companions was indispensable for the complete investigation into the various remaining questions relative to events of last year, which, according to the Commission, were now matters of detail only, they would leave for Bitlis on the following Thursday. The Delegates stated in reply that, although they admitted the eventual necessity of examining the persons in question, they considered that the better course would be to postpone their departure for Bitlis until they had made a more thorough investigation into the Ghelié-Guzan and other occurrences.

The Commission, however, adhered to its decision. The witnesses referred to in Mr. Shipley's previous telegrams, whose testimony was of importance, had not yet been produced, the Commission alleging that, notwithstanding the active search they had set on foot, the witnesses were not to be found. Mr. Shipley and his colleagues think that until these witnesses are produced, grave objections exist to the Commission's absenting itself for four or five weeks from Moosh, which would practically result in a suspension of all inquiries in that district, while the Delegates when at Bitlis would remain in total ignorance of what was being done by the Moosh authorities with regard to those witnesses.

Mr. Shipley concludes by stating that, although the examination of Mourad is also of great importance, its adjournment is not a matter of equal consequence.

We have replied to the Delegates that they are to inform the Commission that, according to instructions received from their Ambassadors, they cannot leave Moosh before the Commission has taken all the evidence and carried out all the investigations which the Delegates consider necessary. They are to add that, if the Commission, disregarding this communication, persists in its intention of proceeding immediately to Bitlis, all its proceedings in the absence of the Delegates will be considered as null.

To-morrow the Dragomans of the three Embassies will inform the Porte of the above communications, and will request them to send instructions to the Commission in accordance with our telegram to the Delegates.

No. 252.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 24.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburgh, March* 18, 1895.

PRINCE LOBANOFF will give me a reply as to the Sultan's refusal to allow the Dragoman selected by the Consuls to proceed to Moosh (see Foreign Office telegram No. 22), but he must first consult M. Nélidoff, from whom he has heard nothing on this matter. His Excellency does not understand the necessity of the immediate departure of Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum for Moosh: inasmuch as the three Ambassadors are acting together, this departure might give rise to the idea that their respective Governments were not acting in complete harmony.

No. 253.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 116.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 18, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 136 of the 21th ultimo, relative to certain outrages committed on Gaspar Iordian, an Armenian, in the province of Yozgat, and reported by Her Majesty's Consul at Angora.

I approve your Excellency's action in calling the attention of the Porte to this atrocious case.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 254.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 117.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 18, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 146 of the 2nd instant, reporting the representations made by you to the Porte as to the interference of the Turkish authorities with Marshinian's schools.

I approve the action taken by your Excellency in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 255.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 19.)

(No. 94.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 19, 1895.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 28 of the 18th instant:

The French and Russian Ambassadors are in the habit of making representations independently with a certain amount of success. They would deprecate any joint representation, until it can be made in the shape of a demand for a general amnesty, and can form part of the scheme of proposed reforms.

Germany will only act in accord with all the other Powers; Austria wishes to keep in the background; Italy would join us, but we should not derive any additional strength from her support, which might, moreover, embarrass our common action with France and Russia.

Under these circumstances, I do not think that it would be easy to induce the Powers to take any joint action at present respecting the prisoners.

In any case, before inviting the other Powers to join us, it would, in my opinion, be well to await the result of the representations which I am to make.

No. 256.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 19.)

(No. 95.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 19, 1895, 4·10 P.M.

PATRIARCH states that eighteen Armenians were recently arrested at Kara-Hissar and conveyed to a village called Andreas, where they were severely beaten in order to force them to avow that they belonged to a revolutionary Committee.

From other places he hears of continual persecution and imprisonment of Armenians on the most flimsy pretexts.

No. 257.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 19.)

(No. 96.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 19, 1895, 7·20 P.M.

I HAVE the honour to state with reference to my telegram No. 93, that the Sublime Porte has not supported the proposal of the Commissioners to leave for Bitlis.

The instructions sent to them are to the effect that they must remain at Moush, and that all the witnesses whom the Delegates suggest must be examined.

No. 258.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 19.)

(No. 97.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 19, 1895, 7·30 P.M.

MR. BLOCK, by my instructions, made a communication to Said Pasha in regard to the danger of fanatical outbreaks in Asia Minor at various places.

His Excellency replied that the Porte was aware of the serious consequences to Turkey if such outbreaks occurred, and that efforts would be made to prevent them. He said that assurances had been given to the United States' Minister recently in regard to the subject in writing; also that when Her Majesty's Embassy on a former occasion had made representations the Porte has telegraphed for information, and had learned that every precaution was being taken by the Valis.

No. 259.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 21.)

(No. 103.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 15, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, giving accounts of the Sassoon massacres furnished by the Turkish soldier Mevloud and the Armenian Khazar.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 259.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 2, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of the statements taken at Erzeroum:—

1. Of a survivor of the Sassoon massacres named Khazar, of Semal, whom I carefully questioned myself.

2. Of a discharged sergeant in the army named Mevloud Agha, who was present throughout the operations in Sassoon, and was examined by the Italian Consul, M. Monaco, and Mr. Francis Scudamore, the "Daily News" correspondent.

Both these statements are of great interest, the former as throwing light on the apparently premeditated way in which the Sassoon villages were attacked and destroyed, and on the subsequent endeavours on the part of the authorities to throw the blame of the massacres upon the Kurds, and the latter, as giving a consecutive account of the affair from the Turkish soldier's point of view, which, in all essentials, confirms the testimony of the Armenian witnesses before the Commission.

I am sending copies of these statements, as well as those of Agop and Giragos, mentioned in my despatch to your Excellency of the 20th February, to Mr. Shipley at Moush, for the Delegates to make such use of as they think proper; but I fear that both Khazar and Mevloud would be but unwilling witnesses before a Turkish Commission or Court of Justice unless they were assured of some subsequent effectual protection.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 259.

Story of Khazar, Son of Der Arakel.

KHAZAR, son of Der Arakel, brother of Agop and of Mikhail Vargabet. He is about thirty years of age, and lived at Semal. Is married—his wife, two sons and two daughters, are all survivors; one daughter, Mariani, having been killed in massacres. With him lived his uncle, Hofsep, with his wife and his daughter Markarid, and his cousin Dono, with his son Avedis, a child of two years old. All these were killed in the massacre, or six out of a household of thirteen.

About the beginning of the wheat harvest, soldiers came and camped at Merghé-Mouzan, which is half-an-hour from Semal. Friendly Sassoon Kurds came and warned

the villagers that the soldiers meant mischief, and urged them to fly, but they did not do so. More soldiers kept arriving during ten (?) days following the beginning of the troubles. One day Bekirauli Kurds came and drove off the sheep of the village, killing one man. The friendly Kurds told them that the Bekirauli were incited to do this by the soldiers (the Kurds living in Semal and Shenik had gone away about a week previously, having received some warning of what was preparing). The shepherds followed them, and after a fight, in which men were killed on both sides, they recovered their sheep, and drove them back the same day. About 200 Kurd sheep were mixed up with their own, and these the "Ress" separated and sent back. The Khizir of the village was then sent with ten sheep and six batmans of butter as a present to the soldiers, with a request that they would come and protect the village, and arrange the quarrel with the Kurds. The Khizir never came back, and is reported to have been murdered.

The next day they found the village surrounded by men in Kurd dress, who opened fire; the villagers defended themselves, and desultory fighting went on for three days. Some of the villagers were killed and wounded, and, he believes, some of their assailants also. He carried a flint gun, and used it; but saw no one fall to his shots. Then the friendly Kurds told them that some of the supposed Kurds were disguised soldiers, and they resolved to abandon the village and fly, "not wishing to fight against the Government." So they fled to Ghelié-Guzan; some of the aged and very young people remained in the village, which was sacked and burned, those who remained being burnt in their houses. The enemy pursued them, and attacked Ghelié-Guzan. The day after they left Semal Shenik also was burned, and its people also came to Ghelié-Guzan. Fighting at Ghelié-Guzan lasted five days. Ghelié-Guzan with Aliantzeh (a kind of suburb) had about 300 houses. Finally, the enemy made a night attack, and set fire to the village, and they had to escape, pursued by the troops, who slaughtered many in their flight. He saw many children cut down and bayonetted—Simo, Boghos, Hatcho, all children of neighbours. He saw his cousin, Dono, running with his little boy, Avedis (2 years old), on his shoulder. A bullet struck him in the leg and he fell. Soldiers came up, and one struck with a "karna" or sword-bayonet at the child, but Dono warded the blow with his arm, which was nearly cut through. Then another soldier drove his bayonet through the child's body, and carried him away on it, while two others killed Dono with their bayonets. The survivors reached Antoh Dagh, distant two hours; the mountain was blocked by troops. Here they remained for twenty days without bread, eating raw mutton chiefly, and defending themselves as best they could, rolling down stones on their assailants and firing at them; but he never saw any soldiers killed.

He supposed there were about 1,000 people of Ghelié-Guzan and 600 to 700 each from Shenik and Semal on the mountain.

At last terms were offered to them; they would be spared if they came down and returned to their villages. Der Ohannes, Priest, of Semal, agreed to these terms, and about 500 others, but Kirko, "Ress," of Shenik, who had taken command, said that the Turks would not keep faith with them, and refused to surrender. He (Khazar) at first went with Der Ohannes, but afterwards thought better of it, and turned back. They hid in the oak wood, and at last, by climbing over rocks and steep places, many of them managed to escape in the direction of Pasour (capital of Khoulp Caza). He remained in hiding many (twenty?) days, until word came that the Mushir Pasha had stopped the killing, and then the Kaimakam of Khoulp went out and collected the fugitives in woods and mountains, and escorted them back to their villages. He heard that Kirko, who had escaped to Pasour, and had 300 liras in his belt, was betrayed by a supposed friendly Kurd, and put to death by orders of a great Sheikh, into whose hands he fell.

When they returned to their villages, the Government offered them, through a superior officer (Colonel or Major):—

1. To repay their losses two-fold.

2. To exempt them from taxes for seven years if they would rebuild their houses, and sign a document declaring that all their sufferings had been *at the hands of the Kurds*. But they refused, saying that their women and children had been slaughtered, their houses burnt, and themselves ruined, and that it was impossible to live in their old homes any more, as they were sure that the same fate would befall them again.

So after ten days' detention they were allowed to go to the Moush Plain, in search of food and shelter; and he (Khazar) ultimately made his way to the village of Kaghkik, in Khnis, where his wife and children are now. He was a well-to-do man, but is now reduced to beggary, and had come to Erzeroum to beg, as he and his were now a burden on the villagers who had taken them in.

Inclosure 3 in No. 259.

Story of Mevloud Agha.

TCHAOUSH, late of 25th [?] Regiment, about 26 years of age, and had served four years. He has left the army. He had been in Moush for some time, and was employed in the dispensary of the hospital there. When the expedition left Moush for Sassoon, he accompanied his own regiment as a combatant non-commissioned officer. His regiment was one of those under Ismail Bey, Colonel.

His regiment reached the first camp near the scene of subsequent fighting in the Shatakh nahié in the night. Other troops were already camped there. Firing was going on in the distance. They lay there four days, firing continuing all the time.

During this time he heard it said that money was being paid by the wealthier people of the neighbouring villages in return for promises of protection to officers and non-commissioned officers of his regiment, and also to Kurds. Kurds were constantly in and out of the camp.

On the fifth day, after the evening meal, his regiment marched to Shenik, an easy march. They found fighting going on; the houses were already in flames. Soon the villagers took to flight, many in one body, and their firing almost ceased. The troops fired two rounds from two mountain-guns after them, but did not pursue beyond the limits of the village. During this time the Badikoulis and Vezzoulis (? Velikoulis) were plundering the burning houses, and killing any people they found in them. The soldiers did not join in this, but remained at the entrance of the village, and killed any fugitives who came near them. The next morning they marched to Ghelié-Guzan. They found a good many dead and some wounded, and several small children on the road. These they killed. When they arrived at Ghelié-Guzan it was already surrounded, and fighting (? firing) was going on. They stayed outside the village for two or three days, and every now and then attacks were made, but chiefly by the Kurds, the soldiers taking no part. During these days again he heard that Armenians came to the camp and gave money to the officers. Whether they afterwards returned to Ghelié-Guzan, or whether they were allowed to get away, he did not know. Then one night the troops were allowed to attack the village. Mountain-guns were again used, and, under cover of these, the first houses were soon set on fire. The soldiers were firing from elevations (N.B.—I understand either rocks or a hill-side path, but am not sure which), and the Kurds rushed into the street, where the stampede had now caused a great crush. A good many Kurds were killed by the fire of the troops. The fight lasted some time before the fugitives had got clear of the town, then it was daylight; the troops were ordered to pursue. Some of the soldiers, however, stayed and helped the Kurds to plunder. A great many villagers were killed between the town and the rocks.

The next day (or next day but one) part of his regiment got orders to march. With them were parts of other battalions, and they had several mountain-guns. The road was very bad, so bad that the mules could not carry the guns, and the soldiers had to get up and drag them up the rocks. There were several difficult passes, and it took them some time to get to the neighbourhood of Talori. There they remained several days resting. Kurds came constantly to the camp. After a time, other soldiers came and more Kurds. Then they attacked the villages, apparently in the same manner as before, i.e., the Kurds were sent in front to do the dirty work and sustain the night attack, while the troops fired from the rocks at a distance. The next day they bombarded the houses and took the villages. There was a wood near by where a large number of villagers, men, women, and children, had taken refuge. On one side this wood was surrounded by Kurds, and on the other the troops were stationed. The six guns were then laid on the wood, and thirteen rounds were fired from each gun. By that time the whole wood was in flames. No doubt a good number of the refugees in the wood managed to escape, but by far the greater number were killed by the shells or were burnt to death.

There was in one of the Talori villages a large farmstead, where a number of women and children and some old people had shut themselves up. Here also the guns were brought to bear, and the place was set on fire. Not one of the inmates escaped. Two girls who had been in the wood were taken, one by the Colonel, the other by a Major. They were brought back with the troops to Ghelié-Guzan, but there they disappeared. He saw no other Armenian women with his regiment. Whether these two were killed at Ghelié-Guzan he did not know, and knew nothing of the church of Serp Merapa. At Ghelié-Guzan the troops nearly all reassembled and lay for several weeks. They had only been there a day or two when the first batch of the Armenians, who had escaped

from Ghelié-Guzan and went to Antok mountain, began to come in. They had already sent word that they were ready to surrender, and that they prayed for protection from the Sultan's troops. The first batch that came in numbered 450 to 500 persons, men, women, and children. They had a Kehaya, who led them. When these people had come into the narrow valley where the troops were camped the road behind them was closed by the soldiers. Then Colonel came forward to the open space where the Kehaya was, and ordered him to be seized. "Who is the first among you?" he cried to the people. The Kehaya said, "It is I," and the people, being asked again, said, "It is he." Then the Colonel said, "What should be done to one who so misleads the people?" The Kehaya, answering himself, said, "Kill me if you will; I take the responsibility."

Some one, he did not know whether a soldier or an Armenian, cried, "Let him be blinded; he has already been blind." The Colonel then gave the order, "Take out his eyes," and one of the soldiers prised them out with his knife. The Kehaya then cried, "Let me die!" and three soldiers bayonetted him in the belly. Then the people who had followed him were led aside and given food.

The next day more people came in. The head of the valley was held by a double cordon of troops, who let in all who would come, but let none pass out. During the second day a detachment of troops was engaged in digging two big trenches at the base of a steep cliff that formed the side of narrow ravine at the foot of the valley. At the bottom of this ravine was a small stream, and in the sides were caves where the inhabitants of the village used sometimes to store their hay. At sundown on this day the soldiers were paraded, and the officers, passing along the lines, gave orders as follows: "From the 1st Buluk, ten odd numbers, four paces to the front; from 2nd ditto, fifteen even numbers, four paces to the front; from the 3rd ditto, five odd numbers (double figures), four paces to the front," and so on through all the companies assembled. Then the soldiers went back to their bivouacs and their evening meal; but the selected men were ordered to sit and eat apart, each group from a company separately. When the night was fully dark officers came along and ordered, "Selected men of the 1st company, come this way." Then they were marched forward to the foot of the valley. There, at the cliff edge of the ravine, they found a number of villagers, men, women, and children, sometimes twenty, sometimes fifty, sometimes seventy or more. An officer then detached from the villagers a batch of ten or twenty, and gave the order, "Kill them, and throw them there." The selected soldiers then bayonetted these villagers, and threw their bodies into the trenches at the base of the ravine.

This went on every night for some while; sometimes 300 to 400 were killed in this way in a night, sometimes a much smaller number. (It was suggested to the Tchaoush that the trenches must have soon been filled up. To this he replied that, when that happened, a working party was ordered to clear the trenches, and the bodies were then thrown into the ravine or into the hay pits to make room for more in the trenches.)

Asked whether the Armenians were armed, he said that they had not, any one of them, so much as a belt knife.

Asked whether they resisted, he said that till towards the end they none of them knew that was their fate until face to face with the bayonets. Asked whether there were many children among them, he answered, "Very many;" but he thanked God that he had not had to murder any of them.

(I then overheard his friend say to him, "And how many did *you* kill?" and he whispered back, "God knows! It may have been five, it may have been seven. What could I do? I had my orders." This was not said to me.)

Asked, "How did it end?" he said, "At length the Mushir arrived from Moush and gave orders that the slaughter should cease. After that very few more villagers were killed." He affirmed, however, several times that there were some more murders.

Asked whether during the whole of the affair there had been many casualties amongst the soldiers, he replied thus: "From first to last he had never heard of any soldier being even wounded, much less killed, and that he did not believe that any one of the whole force had in any way suffered." "Many Kurds," he added, "were undoubtedly killed, especially in the earlier days of the affair."

Asked whether he had ever seen any other fighting, "No;" and added that by God's grace he never would.

No. 260.

Evangelical Alliance to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 21.)

My Lord, *7, Adam Street, Strand, London, March* 19, 1895.

REFERRING to your Lordship's communications of the 29th January and 6th February, and also to my letter of the 16th February, I am sorry to have to send your Lordship an extract from a communication just received from our Constantinople Committee. Our correspondent writes as follows:—

"On Sir Phillip Currie's initiative, supported by Baron de Staal, the Dutch Minister, the Grand Vizier ordered the school to be opened in the parsonage at Ordou. The order was communicated to the Protestants the 3rd March, and the school was opened on the 4th March. Immediately a Greek mob, composed chiefly of women, but directed by the clergy, assaulted the place and tore everything to pieces. They broke all the windows, the iron shutters, the window frames, the benches, and destroyed all the books and the school furniture. The Governor of Ordou and the police stood as spectators, not interfering except to order the Protestants to make no resistance while their property was being wrecked."

This is one of the numerous instances where the Sultan's Government have yielded to the appeals made to them, and yet their good intentions have been frustrated by the action or inaction of local officials. Our Council feel sure, however, that Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople will not fail to take up this matter energetically; but we think it right to communicate the facts direct to your Lordship.

At the same time, I am desired by our Council to forward to you a very brief summary of a statement* we have received from ——————,† of Mosul, regarding the state of things in Kurdistan. It is not with a view of unnecessarily troubling your Lordship that we send this communication, but it may be taken as one of many indications of the grave difficulty of maintaining the principle of religious liberty in Turkey, and about which our Council have already explained to your Lordship their constant anxiety.

Believe me, &c.

(Signed) A. J. ARNOLD,
General Secretary.

No. 261.

The Lord Mayor of Manchester to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 21.)

My Lord; *Town Hall, Manchester, March* 20, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to herewith inclose a Memorial of the Council of the City of Manchester in reference to the persecution of Christians in Armenia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. LLOYD.

Inclosure in No. 261.

Memorial.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Kimberley, K.G., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Memorial of the Mayor, Aldermen, and citizens, of the city of Manchester, in the County of Lancaster,

Sheweth:

THAT the attention of your memorialists has been called to the present unhappy state of affairs existing in Armenia, and to the crimes, outrages, and massacres which the Turkish Government have allowed to be committed on the Christian population in that country.

* Printed as a separate communication.
† The name and all details can be supplied in confidence.

That your memorialists desire to record their indignation at such atrocities, and to call upon Her Majesty's Government to secure a full and impartial inquiry into them and obtain for the witnesses who may give evidence at the inquiry such effective protection as may be found necessary.

Your memorialists would further urge upon Her Majesty's Government to take the initiative in concert with the other Great Powers in requiring the Sublime Porte to observe the provisions of the LXIst Article of the Treaty of Berlin, and introduce definite and thorough reforms into the administration of Armenian provinces for the security of the life, honour, and property of the inhabitants.

Your memorialists would venture to suggest to Her Majesty's Government that

unction with any scheme for the amelioration of Armenia the following matters should be considered, namely:—

1. The appointment of a Governor-General for a term of years, the Powers to have a veto.

2. An International Commission of Supervision.

3. Local control over the collection and assessment of direct taxes.

4. The admission of Christians to militia and police in proportion to their numbers.

Your memorialists feel assured, and respectfully submit to Her Majesty's Government, that unless some such measures as those above stated are adopted, no scheme which is put into force will adequately insure the safety of life, honour, and property of the Christian population in Armenia, and that there will be no hope of rescuing the Armenian provinces from systematic oppression, horrible massacres, and shocking outrages, which, if left unchecked, will ultimately lead to complications the extent of which it is difficult to foresee.

Your memorialists would point out that it is an historical fact that Her Majesty's Government has incurred special obligations towards the Armenian people in preventing Russia delivering them, according to the XVIth Article of the San Stefano Treaty, from Turkish misrule, and they therefore feel that they have a right to expect that England, as a nation of honour, will, without further delay, show itself in earnest in doing its own clearly-defined duty so deliberately imposed on itself by the Treaty of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention.

Your memorialists trust that this Memorial may receive the favourable consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

Given under our Common Seal this 20th day of March, 1895.

(Signed) A. LLOYD, *Lord Mayor.* (Seal.)
WM. HENRY TALBOT,
Town Clerk.

No. 262.

Rustem Pasha to Foreign Office.—(Received March 21.)

(Particulière.)

Cher Sir Thomas, 1, *Bryanston Square, London, le 21 Mars,* 1895.

JE viens de recevoir de la Sublime Porte un télégramme relatif à une rixe qui s'est produite à Tokat entre Musulmans et Arméniens; et je vous en envoie ci-inclus une copie pour l'information du Comte de Kimberley. La dépêche porte que la tranquillité a été rétablie presque aussitôt; et j'espère que l'incident, tout regrettable qu'il soit, n'aura pas de suites fâcheuses.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) RUSTEM.

Inclosure in No. 262.

Said Pasha to Rustem Pasha.

(Télégraphique.) *Constantinople, le 21 Mars,* 1895.

UN incident local vient de se produire à Tokat (Gouvernement Général de Sivas).

Dans la matinée d'avant-hier, 19 Mars, une dispute insignifiante eût lieu dans le bazar de Tokat entre un Arménien et deux gardiens au sujet d'un tapis. Pendant que les agents de l'autorité dressaient leur procès-verbal sur ce fait, plusieurs jeunes

gens Arméniens se mirent à parcourir les rues de la ville et firent sonner le tocsin d'alarme, ce qui amena la fermeture des boutiques et un rassemblement d'Arméniens dans la résidence de l'Évêque et dans l'église avoisinante. Sur ces entrefaites, des habitants Musulmans, spectateurs de ce va et vient insolite, essuyèrent plusieurs coups de feu tirés des maisons Arméniennes sises autour de l'église. Dans le démêlé qui s'en est suivi, il y aurait eu du côté des Musulmans quelques blessés et du côté des Arméniens un tué et une dizaine de blessés. L'agitation fut immédiatement réprimée par les agents de l'autorité accourus sur les lieux. Dix prévenus Arméniens et les deux susdits gardes de sûreté du bazar ont été arrêtés, et les agresseurs sont activement recherchés.

A l'heure qu'il est tout est rentré dans le calme, et le Vali de Sivas s'est rendu en personne sur les lieux accompagné du Procureur-Général de la Cour d'Appel du vilayet afin d'ouvrir une enquête judiciaire impartiale sur cet incident regrettable et tout à fait inattendu.

Je me réserve de vous mettre plus tard au courant du résultat de l'enquête.

No. 263.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 21.)

(No. 98.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 21,* 1895, 5 P.M.

POLITICAL prisoners in Asia Minor: Your Lordship's despatch No. 114 of the 16th March.

The Sultan sent orders to the Porte on the 14th instant that all Armenian ecclesiastics now undergoing sentences should be at once brought to the capital, together with the documents which related to their case; and that they should all be set at liberty, with the exception of those imprisoned for murder or other crimes, after they had given an oath not to engage in such work again.

The Grand Vizier informed me of above to-day when I called to speak to him on the subject, and stated that it might be made public.

His Highness added privately, in regard to these ecclesiatics, that the Porte would demand that important posts should not be given them.

No. 264.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 21.)

(No. 99.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 21,* 1895, 6 P.M.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding telegram, I urged the Grand Vizier this afternoon in the strongest terms to advise the Sultan to carry out the recommendations contained in your Lordship's despatch No. 114 of the 16th March, and at the same time I handed him an extract from the despatch in Turkish.

His Highness promised me, confidentially, that he would use his utmost endeavours to obtain the issue of similar orders in regard to all the political prisoners to those which had been given in regard to the ecclesiastics, and of which he had previously informed me officially, as reported in my telegram No. 98 of to-day.

I urged on his Highness the advisability of the issue of instructions at the same time to the authorities in the provinces to cease from arresting Armenians without grounds or discrimination.

I omitted from the document I handed to the Grand Vizier the reference to the Treaty of Berlin, as he seemed at last to be really alive to the danger of the situation; but I intimated that in case the recommendations of Her Majesty's Government were not acted upon I had something in reserve.

No. 265.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 21.)

(No. 100.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 21, 1895, 5·15 P.M.*

THE Grand Vizier suggested to me to-day that, as the Porte had informed Her Majesty's Embassy that no correspondents would be allowed in Asia Minor, I should take steps to recall Dillon and another correspondent from Erzeroum. His Highness did not press the point when I replied that I had no authority over these gentlemen and that this Embassy had not undertaken to enforce the Porte's prohibition.

No. 266.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 22.)

(No. 101.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 22, 1895, 2·50 P.M.*

IN the course of our conversation last night the Sultan told me that the Armenians and Turks had come into conflict at Tokat, and that the former were the aggressors. The Military Commandant had restored order, and the Vali of Sivas had been instructed to set out at once for the place and deal impartially with the matter. One Armenian had, His Majesty said, been killed, and several wounded on both sides.

Information from a Turkish source has reached the Armenian Patriarch that it was a quarrel in a shop which caused the fight; that forty lives were lost, and that fire-arms were used on both sides.

No. 267.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 29.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March 22, 1895.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 163 of the 15th instant, forwarding statements made by Khazar, an Armenian, and Mevloud, a Turkish soldier, in regard to the massacres in the Sassoon district.

It seems very desirable that these men, especially Mevloud, should give evidence before the Commission of Inquiry. Can you and your colleagues suggest any way in which this could be arranged?

No. 268.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 30.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March 22, 1895.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram No. 98 of yesterday, and have heard with much satisfaction of the orders given by the Sultan for the release of the Armenian ecclesiastics now in prison on political grounds.

Her Majesty's Government entirely approve your action and language on behalf of the Armenians, as reported in your subsequent telegrams Nos. 99 and 100 of the same day.

No. 269.

Rustem Pasha to Foreign Office.—(Received March 23.)

(Particulière.)
Cher Sir Thomas, 1, *Bryanston Square, London, le 23 Mars*, 1895.

JE viens de recevoir un nouveau télégramme de la Sublime Porte concernant l'incident de Tokat, et je m'empresse de vous en envoyer ci-joint une copie pour

l'information de Lord Kimberley. Je vois avec plaisir que la tranquillité n'a plus été troublée depuis la date de la première dépêche, et que les mesures nécessaires sont prises pour rechercher les coupables et les déférer à la justice.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) RUSTEM.

Inclosure in No. 269.

Saïd Pasha to Rustem Pasha.

(Télégraphique.) *Constantinople, le 22 Mars*, 1895.

DES télégrammes subséquents parvenus à la Sublime Porte du Vali de Sivas et des Gouverneur et Commandant Militaire de Tokat nous annoncent que le calme continue à régner dans la ville; que des mesures sont prises pour assurer la sécurité des habitants; que des exhortations et assurances sont prodiguées aux chefs civils et religieux des quartiers Musulmans et Chrétiens afin de ramener la concorde entre les deux éléments; que les recherches pour découvrir le meurtrier de l'Arménien tué n'ont pas encore abouti, mais que l'instruction en général se poursuit avec la plus grande activité.

Ce qui paraît dès à présent ressortir de l'incident, c'est que le rassemblement en masse et irréfléchi des habitants Arméniens dans l'Évêché de Tokat a jeté soudainement l'alarme et provoquée les faits regrettables qui vous sont déjà connus.

No. 270.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 103.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 23, 1895, 6·50 P.M.*

I HAVE been informed by the Grand Vizier that telegraphic orders have been sent to the Government authorities in Asia Minor to report immediately on the number of Armenians who are imprisoned there. The reports are to give the reasons for such imprisonment, and the grounds of condemnation in cases where they have been condemned.

After the Feast of Bairam, which ends on the 29th instant, the Commission mentioned by the Sultan will, the Grand Vizier states, immediately commence its investigation.

No. 271.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 103 A.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 23, 1895, 2·30 P.M.*

I COMMUNICATED Mevloud's evidence to my colleagues, but they did not set any value on it, and had heard that he was a dipsomaniac.

The above is with reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 29.

I have telegraphed to Shipley for his suggestions.

No. 272.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 104.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 23, 1895, 7·15 P.M.*

AFTER the Selamlik yesterday the Sultan received the French Ambassador, and seemed to his Excellency to be a good deal disturbed by the communication which I made him on Thursday.

M. Cambon spoke to His Majesty about the Armenian prisoners, and also stated

that the three Powers were preparing certain proposals in regard to reforms, which they intended to recommend to the Ottoman Government.

His Majesty anxiously inquired as to the nature of these reforms, and to-day renewed his inquiry by a Secretary, whom he sent to M. Cambon.

The latter, however, informs me that he refused to give particulars.

No. 273.

Sir M. Durand to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 15.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, March 23, 1895.*

MR. PATON has obtained a few statements from Armenian refugees who have themselves suffered, but not many have come to Persia. He hears that at Erwan refugees are to be found, but I presume your Lordship would not wish him to proceed to that place.

No. 274.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 7.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March 23, 1895.*

I HAVE received your telegram No. 15 of to-day.

Mr. Paton should not leave Persian territory.

No. 275.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 121.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 23, 1895.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 144 of the 2nd instant, forwarding Reports from Her Majesty's Consular officers at Erzeroum and Van on the attitude of the Vali, Bahri Pasha, and other Government officials in the latter vilayet towards the Christians, and the feeling of uneasiness prevalent among the latter.

I request your Excellency to bring the facts stated by Mr. Vice-Consul Hallward to the knowledge of the Porte, if you have not already done so, and to suggest the advisability of Bahri Pasha's removal from Van, and of a proper investigation into the state of the prisons and the charges against the prisoners.

I should also be glad if you will make inquiry into the truth of a report which has reached Her Majesty's Government to the effect that the Governor of Van is intimidating witnesses who wish to give evidence before the Commission of Inquiry at Moush.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 276.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 24.)

(No. 106.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 24, 1895, 5·15 P.M.*

AMERICAN Consul at Sivas has sent the following telegram to American Minister here, who has communicated it to me:—

"I guess the fight at Tokat was not very serious, fifty Armenians wounded, and five to ten killed.

"Condition somewhat a critical one, what with revolutionists, fanatics, and an impotent Government."

No. 277.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 24.)

(No. 107.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 24, 1895, 10 A.M.*

MR. BARNHAM telegraphs from Aleppo as follows:—

"The Archbishop of Zeitoun, together with two Armenian prisoners and three priests, were yesterday sent with an escort to Alexandretta. I do not know what their destination is."

No. 278.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 122.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 25, 1895.*

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith a copy of a question asked in Parliament, together with the reply, respecting certain alleged proceedings on the part of Bekir Pasha, the Mutessarif of Amassia.

I shall be glad if your Excellency will inquire into the truth of these statements.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 279.

Foreign Office to the Lord Mayor of Manchester.

My Lord Mayor, *Foreign Office, March 25, 1895.*

I AM directed by the Earl of Kimberley to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter of the 20th instant, forwarding a Memorial from the Council of the City of Manchester in regard to the treatment of the Christian population in Turkish Armenia.

Lord Kimberley desires me to state that the questions referred to in the Memorial are receiving the earnest attention of Her Majesty's Government.

His Lordship would, however, observe that it is not correct to say that "it is an historical fact that Her Majesty's Government incurred special obligations towards the Armenian people in preventing Russia delivering them, according to the XVIIth Article of the San Stefano Treaty, from Turkish misrule."

The XVIIth Article of the Treaty of San Stefano was as follows:—

"As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupy in Armenia, and which is to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect without further delay the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians."

Her Majesty's Government have done nothing to relieve the Porte from the engagement to Russia contained in this Article. They joined with the other Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin in obtaining from the Porte an exactly identical pledge, which is embodied in Article LXI of the Treaty, with a further promise that the Porte "will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect" (*i.e.*, for the benefit of the Armenians) "to the Powers who will superintend their application."

It is open to Russia, as well as to any one or more of the other Signatory Powers, to call upon the Porte to fulfil those obligations, and the only effect of the deliberations of the Congress of Berlin was to substitute an engagement to all the Great Powers for one which was entered into with Russia alone.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 280.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 26.)

(No. 164.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 15, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a Petition which I have received from certain Armenians residing at Amassia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 280.

Armenians residing at Amassia to Sir P. Currie.

(Traduction.)
Excellence, *Amassia, le* 17 (29) *Février*, 1895.

LA sympathie dont jouissent les peuples opprimés et dépourvus de protection, de la part des Chrétiens de l'Angleterre, et l'influence puissante du noble Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique, qui s'exerce partout où la tyrannie existe, sont universellement connues. Cette sympathie et cette influence précieuse nous ont donné la liberté de soumettre nos plaintes et nos prières de tout temps, aux fidèles Représentants de ce puissant Etat. Car déjà nous, Arméniens d'Amassia, nous avons été obligés d'occuper à quelques reprises les fonctionnaires Anglais de nos informations et de nos supplications par suite des persécutions dont nous sommes l'objet.

Et voici maintenant aussi poussés par plusieurs circonstances, et en plus forte raison en l'absence de tout Représentant d'un État Européen quelconque ici, nous prenons la liberté de soumettre à votre Excellence la présente requête et nous vous supplions de nous entendre.

Pendant que nous sommes de plus en plus opprimés par les persécutions du Gouvernement qui fait encaisser les impôts de la classe pauvre avec la plus grande barbarie; pendant que dans les prisons les plus grandes souffrances sont commises, que les gémissements y sont perpétuels et que des dizaines de détenus y perdent la vie; pendant que les soldats réguliers commettent sur les Arméniens des actes de rapacité et de cruauté; pendant qu'on nous défend de nous mettre en communication non seulement avec les habitants des villes et des villages voisins, mais même avec nos voisins de porte dans notre ville même; pendant que, enfin, la conséquence de tout ceci est une misère épouvantable pour les Arméniens, le Gouvernement qui fait semblant de ne rien voir, fait tous ses efforts pour nous arracher des télégrammes de remercîment et de contentement. N'oublions pas de mentionner aussi que tous nos professeurs ont été emprisonnés, plusieurs d'entre eux exilés sans jugement et que depuis trois ans nos écoles ont été fermées et nos enfants restent ignorants (ce qui est le but du Gouvernement).

Il y a trois ou quatre semaines Békir Pacha, Mutessarif d'Amassia, en ayant avec lui la coopération de quelques individus achetés, est parvenu à former un Conseil composé de vingt-six personnes dont le but est de surveiller les plaintes qui se préparent contre les actes du Gouvernement et de remettre ces plaintes au Gouvernement.

Comment est-il possible qu'un peuple ne proteste pas et n'élève pas la voix contre tant de persécutions et d'oppressions, lorsque surtout celles-ci augmentent de jour en jour, mais il paraît que c'est l'intérêt du Gouvernement d'en agir ainsi. Le Gouvernement n'a fait mettre en liberté les prisonniers que lorsqu'il est parvenu à instituer ce Conseil et à nous prendre avec des menaces des déclaration de reconnaissance et de fidélité.

A peine la nouvelle de la formation de ce Conseil était parvenue à Sivas que le Vali, Halil Bey, s'est empressé de venir ici le 5 de ce mois soi-disant pour faire une tournée et il s'est mis à parler avec nos autorités et surtout avec les membres du Conseil sur l'importance des adresses de remercîments à Sa Majesté le Sultan.

Enfin il est parvenu à faire signer de force à la classe aisée un télégramme de remercîment et de contentement en promettant la mise en liberté des Arméniens d'Amassia qui sont emprisonnés à Sivas et à Tokat. A peine deux ou trois des signataires ont pu prendre connaissance du contenu du télégramme dont le Vali lui-même, lequel afin d'obliger les autres à signer a fait mettre quelques individus en

prison pour servir d'exemple. C'est donc sans conscience et par suite de leur crainte que les signataires ont signé.

Déjà nous sommes de tout temps, en notre qualité de peuple sans protection, l'objet des caprices du Gouvernement. Mais tout de même nous ne pouvons pas comprendre quel est le but de cet effort qui se manifeste partout pour multiplier le nombre de ces sortes d'adresses de remercîment. Est-ce que par hasard le sang de tant d'innocents, depuis des enfants non encore sévrés jusqu'aux vieillards à barbe blanche aurait fait arriver les protestations jusqu'au ciel, et est-ce que le Gouvernement Turc s'efforcerait à annuler ces puissantes protestations jusque près de la Providence au moyen de ces morceaux de papiers mensongers? Est-ce qu'il songerait à calmer la juste fureur des peuples Chrétiens de l'Europe? Mais comment avec de tels procédés est-il possible de corrompre la justice du Ciel et étouffer et détruire nos droits saints et sacrés? Non, ce n'est pas possible, car désormais l'Europe et le monde entier ont compris les inventions mensongères du Gouvernement Turc lorsqu'il s'agit de faire accepter le mensonge pour la justice et la justice pour le mensonge.

Et comme nous ne savons pas quelle importance et quel rôle peuvent avoir ces sortes d'adresses de remercîment recueillies par force par le Gouvernement Turc au dépens des droits d'un peuple opprimé, nous en informons humblement votre Excellence pour que si ces adresses sont connues un jour de votre Excellence elle n'y croit pas ni non plus la Grande-Bretagne, ni enfin l'Europe entière.

Nous avons l'honneur, &c.

(Here follow 285 signatures.)

No. 281.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 26.)

(No. 165. Secret.)
My Lord, *Pera, March* 14, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 80 of the 30th January, I have learnt from a secret source that Rustem Pasha recently telegraphed to the Porte saying he had paid 1,100*l.* to M. Xémenes, as instructed, and also 29*l.* for the publication of his pamphlet. His Excellency also asked if he was authorized to pay a further sum of 200*l.* demanded by M. Xémenes.

It would appear that some time ago M. Xémenes was paid 2,500*l.*, and that the 1,100*l.* in question is a first instalment of another promised 2,500*l.* The 200*l.* is nominally required to found a daily paper in London, which he says will cost that sum per month.

Rustem Pasha also seems to be afraid that M. Xémenes may betray secrets to M. Cheraz, the editor of an Armenian newspaper, if he does not receive all the money he wants.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 282.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 26.)

(No. 166.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 16, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report the following information which I have received respecting Armenians in prison at Constantinople on political charges.

It would appear that during the Carnival the Armenian Patriarch applied to the Ministry of Police for details respecting such prisoners, and was furnished with a list of ninety-four persons, of whom ten were stated to be condemned to death, and ten to fifteen years' penal servitude.

It is thought that at the present moment there are about 140 Armenians in prison of whom thirty-five were arrested in the last three weeks, and nine in the last five days. These recent arrests are nearly all persons from the provinces, and are mostly small tradesmen.

A large number were imprisoned on account of possessing tickets bearing the emblem of the Revolutionary Committee, and the inscription "For the victims of

Sassoon and the holy cause." One of them, however, was a brick carrier, who could neither read or write, but had some tobacco wrapped up in a piece of the newspaper called "Armenia."

It would appear that the greater part of the recent arrests were due to the denunciations of two Armenian bakers, who were, however, themselves put in prison.

It is said that seven persons were lately released, but four of them rearrested immediately.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 283.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 167.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 16, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 123 of the 20th February, it would appear from information which I have received that the prisoner, Adon Arslanian, is a real revolutionist, well known both to Armenians and to the Turkish police. His true name is Makar Vramian, but he is commonly called "the Socialist." He formerly lived at Constantinople, where an attempt made to arrest him failed, only his *fiancée* and her family being seized and imprisoned. They were, however, subsequently released and went abroad. He himself was captured at Samsoon about a year ago, and was recently brought to Constantinople. He has been sentenced to imprisonment in a fortress near Smyrna, but is still detained here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 284.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 168.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 18, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the Sassoon disturbances and the attitude of the Italian Consul.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 284.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 28, 1895.

IN reply to your Excellency's telegram of yesterday's date, I have the honour to inform you that M. Monaco, the Italian Consul at Erzeroum, shortly after his arrival here in the early part of January, sent to his Ambassador at Constantinople a long report, giving an historical summary of the Sassoon occurrences of last year. Almost all the information contained in this report was supplied by me, confidentially, to M. Monaco. Since that time he has reported regularly all that he has been able to gather about the Sassoon events and the state of the country in general, showing considerable activity in the collection of information. He has already transmitted the evidence of various eye-witnesses of the massacres whom he has been able to question, and, so far, has always communicated anything of interest to me in the frankest possible way.

My Russian and French colleagues continue to show considerable jealousy of M. Monaco in official matters, and, though socially they are on friendly terms with him, they invariably avoid any reference to political subjects or the condition of the country.

For myself, I am glad to be able to say that there is no such constraint in my relations with M. Monaco, and that our views appear to be identical upon all questions of local interest.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 285.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—Received March 26.)

(No. 169.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 18, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, forwarding copy of a despatch from Mr. Hallward in regard to the conversion to Islam of Armenians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 285.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 28, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting numerous cases of Armenians in that province who have become Moslems, the cause in most cases being the desire to escape the oppression of the tax-gatherers.

The information as to the Armenian girls from Sassoon said to be in the hands of Kurd Chiefs, and especially of the notorious Hussein and Emin Pashas, is confirmed from many quarters, though nothing definite as to their number or identity can be ascertained as yet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 285.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, February* 18, 1895.

THE Catholicos of Akhtamar has written to the Vali a complaint against the Kaimakam of Mukus, because the following Armenians of that district have been made Moslems without the proper formalities being carried out:—

In the village of Siguntz, Vosco, widow of Nahoian Mirzo, Garabedian Sahag and his wife Humar.

In the village of Seh, the daughter of Avedis, aged 30.

In the village of Butnot, the daughter of Kalost (a widow) and her two sons, Dermo, aged 7, and Garabed, aged 2, Nargis, mother of Bogos Ohannesian.

In the village of Zartantz, Bogos, brother of Khabo, and the latter's daughter.

The Catholicos also states in his letter that an Armenian named Tukho, of the village of Guigantz, also in the Mukus district, was shut up in a room and suffocated with smoke by a certain Mustafa Tajdin Oglou, a local official, and some zaptiehs from Van, who went to the village to collect taxes.

The five Armenians mentioned in my despatch of the 9th January as having turned Turk were not of one family, but should have been described as follows:—

Murad, originally from Mukus, living at Julamerik.

Sakho and Bogos, of Sibgantz (Mukus district).

Tanko and Istian (girls) of Agvantz (Gargigan district).

Other recent adherents to Islam are an Armenian of Khebabic (a few hours from here) with two children, a boy of 10 and a girl of 5, and a certain Avedis, of Behannis (Hekkiari district).

Except the two girls, Tanko and Istian, who were married to Kurds, most of the others mentioned above turned Turk to escape the oppression of the tax-collectors.

A few days ago, a young girl, daughter of Avedis, of Kasrig, in the Caza of Khoshab, was carried off by Kurds from her father's house in the latter's absence, and is now, I hear, in the house of Derbaz Aga, a notorious old ruffian, who lives some way beyond the said village. She will probably be made a Moslem and be kept in the Kurd's harem.

I passed through this village last summer, and heard then of one or two similar cases that had lately occurred there, in fact they are common enough in the outlying villages, though one only hears of a small proportion of them in Van.

It is said that a considerable number of Armenian girls from Sassoon were brought by soldiers and sold to Kurds in the Adeljevaz and Arjish districts. It seems certain that some of them are in the harems of the notorious Hussein and Emin Pashas.

These outrages are not perpetrated only on Armenians. The Nestorians of Hekkiari are at least equally badly treated. Lately some zaptiehs and soldiers went to Marbishu (Guever district) to collect taxes, and beat one man to such an extent that he sustained a hernia of the bowel, and they violated some of the women, so that others fled by night to Persia.

The Christians of that region are as anxious as they are here about the result of the Sassoon Commission, fearing fresh outbreaks on the part of the Moslems.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 286.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 171.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 20, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the depositions of two Armenians named Hebo and Anna respecting the Sassoon massacres.

These depositions have been communicated to the French and Russian Consuls at Erzeroum and also to the Commission at Moush, with the information that the witnesses are ready to testify, if desired.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 286.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, March 8, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of the depositions taken by me of two Armenian survivors of the massacres in the Sassoon district, one a man named Hebo, the other a woman named Anna.

These depositions, as your Excellency will perceive, agree generally with the stories of other witnesses examined both here and before the Commission at Moush, and which I have already had the honour to forward. In both the statements now transmitted, however, are found certain new and important points.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 286.

Statement of Hebo, of Shenik.

HEBO, of Shenik, aged about 35, the brother of Kriko, the "Ress" of Shenik. His wife's name was Mairo, and he had six children, four boys and two girls, the eldest being about 12 years old. Three of his children were burnt in Shenik, one was killed in the attack on Ghelié-Guzan, and his wife and the two remaining children were lost in the flight from Antok. There were fifty souls in all in Kriko's house, of whom there are, so far as he knows, only ten survivors.

He confirms Khazar's statement, that friendly Kurds warned the villagers that the authorities contemplated their destruction. He explains that the raid was made on the flocks of Semal and Shenik by a number of Kurds of several tribes, Bekiranli, Badikanli, Khiyanli, &c., instigated by the troops. The shepherds of the two villages who recovered the flock were supported by a large band of armed villagers. Three Armenians were killed in the skirmish.

When Shenik was attacked after this, the soldiers who took part in this were disguised as Kurds. He knew they were soldiers, because they carried military rifles and bayonets, and manœuvred to bugle calls. His account of the fighting and capture of Shenik, and of the flight of the villagers, agrees with that given by others, with the difference that he describes them as taking refuge first at Aliantzik, and afterwards falling back upon Ghelié-Guzan. He confirms the story of the fighting at Ghelié-Guzan, round which troops were encamped on the heights. In the flight from Ghelié-Guzan he saw Dono, with his child Avedis, bayoneted by soldiers, as described by Khazar, but with slight differences of detail. But he was much further away at the moment than Khazar. He also saw Nigo, of Shenik, a child of 2 years old, dropped by his mother, who was carrying him, and at once bayoneted by a soldier.

When Der Ohannes, with 500 others, surrendered and came down from Antok, the remainder held out for one day more, and then dispersed and took to flight. He states that a woman named Shaké, wife of Mardo, a relation of Kriko, led thirty women to a precipitous place, intending to commit suicide, and so avoid violation, but the soldiers caught them, and they were violated and killed.

Hebo himself got away by a difficult path to Hosnoud, in Talori. The troops were then surrounding the Talori villages, and bombarded them the next morning. Thence he fled to a Kurd village, Hertenk, where he passed himself off as a Bekiranli Kurd, and got food and shelter. He heard these Kurds say that a Firman had come for the Armenians to be massacred, that the soldiers had called on them to join, but that they refused, and some of them were imprisoned for refusing.

When, after further wanderings, he returned to Shenik, he went to Ghelié-Guzan to look for his dead. They opened a pit full of corpses, but the stench was so terrible that they had to close it again. He there saw the corpse of the priest Der Ohannes, with a rope round the neck, the beard cut off, the eyes dug out, nose, ears, and lips cut off, and the skin flayed off his head on both sides. This was twenty days after the priest's death.

The authorities tried to make him and the others rebuild their houses, and sign a Mazbata thanking the Sultan for all his goodness to them, and declaring that they were quite content. But they refused, and no one signed it. He is now living at the village of Guvendik, in Khinis, and is ready to testify before the Commission if required.

Inclosure 3 in No. 286.

Statement of Anna, of Shenik.

SHE is daughter of Bojhos, and wife of Doné; married only a year ago, and has no children; age about 18. She was a member of Kriko's household.

She confirms the statements of Hebo generally, and adds that, on the capture of Ghelié-Guzan, she, with about 250 other women, was placed by the soldiers in the church. A Kurd Chief, Emner Agha, of the Bekiranli, came and chose her, telling the soldiers he wanted her as a wife for his son, and, though the soldiers tried to detain her, he carried her off. A pregnant woman took her by the hand, and begged to be taken away too; but two soldiers, seeing her condition, made a bet, one saying that the unborn child was a boy, and the other that it was a girl. They ripped the pregnant woman up before Anna's eyes, and pinned the embryo to her breast with a bayonet.

Anna was taken to the Kurd's tents, where she was violated. After seven or eight days the Chief proposed that she should become a Moslem. To this she consented, seeing a chance of escaping. They took her with them for three or four days gathering nuts, and gradually allowed her more liberty, thinking that she was resigned to her fate. At last one day, when she had been allowed to stray a little further alone, she took the

opportunity and ran away to the Autina Mountain, where she knew of a spring. After passing three days and nights in the woods, she made her way to Moush. She supposes that her husband is dead, and is ready to tell her story to the Commission, saying, "What is my blood compared to all that has been shed?" She is to be found with Hebo at the village of Guvendik, in Khinis. Though their family was the richest of all Sassoon they are now absolutely destitute, and even the clothes she wore were given to her by charitable villagers in Passin.

No. 287.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 26.)

(No. 172.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 20, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora respecting the restrictions placed on the right of foreigners to travel in that vilayet, and also of a note which I have addressed to the Sublime Porte on the subject asking for explanations.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 287.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Angora, March* 13, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatches of the 9th February and 23rd November, 1894, on the subject of passport Regulations, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that new and peremptory orders have been received here, to the effect that no foreigner must be allowed to proceed from this vilayet to any other one unless he is furnished with a special permission from Constantinople.

Even if any one wishes to travel within the limits of the vilayet, application must be made to the Vali, who has to refer the matter to the capital, in case he has any doubt as to the propriety of delivering the necessary authority, and thus the applicant may have to wait days or weeks before he gets the permission.

Of the few foreign residents in this vilayet, those who will suffer most from those vexatious rules are the members of the American Mission at Cesarea, who will find it difficult to pursue their work unless some special exemption is granted in their favour, which is not likely.

As to the Armenians, they are subjected to the most rigid control and supervision.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 287.

Note Verbale.

HER Majesty's Embassy have been informed by the British Consul at Angora that orders have recently been issued, forbidding foreigners to proceed from that vilayet to any other unless they are furnished with a special permission from Constantinople. It is also stated that travellers are not allowed to move from one place to another within the limits of the vilayet without permission from the Vali, who frequently refers the matter to the capital, much time being thus lost.

Her Majesty's Embassy have the honour to request the Sublime Porte to favour them with an explanation of their Regulations, which, as reported, appear to constitute an unwarrantable restriction on the right of British subjects residing in the vilayet of Angora to travel in the interior.

Pera, March 19, 1895.

No. 288.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 26.)

(No. 173.)
My Lord, *Pera, March* 20, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 17 of the 8th January, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a list of the villages destroyed during the disturbances in the Sassoon district as supplied to me by the Armenian Patriarch.

I referred the list in question to Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, and now inclose the reply which I have received from Mr. Graves.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 288.

List of Villages destroyed.—(*Communicated by the Armenian Patriarch, January* 31, 1895.)

Nos.	Noms des Villages.	Nombre de Maisons.
1	Guirmif	50
2	Cop	50
3	Tetzank	30
4	Kéghaeben	40
5	Chouchmanerg	80
6	Semal	60
7	Shénék	110
8	Aliantzik }	400
9	Guélléguzan }	
10	Aghpi	80
11	Seravank	10
12	Tekhik	10
13	Guélérash	20
14	Guellégudnem	25
15	Tapi	20
16	Hitenk	100
17	Ergoth	25
18	Isperani	45
19	Khodsads-vank	35
20	Komatz-vank	18
21	Kerdumank	60
22	Dalvori (Talori)	760
23	Tekkhentzar	30
24	Piori	20
25	Tevalink	30
26	Khentzorig	75
27	Catzarink	150
28	Metkugh	110
29	Tatank	75
30	Engonzig	20
31	Heghine	45
32	Nerkine-Heghine	30
33	Kegher-vank	80
34	Guélegurz	10
35	Bolakan	25
36	Chénist	50
37	Taleizor	35
38	Ochonil	60
39	Tertank	50
40	Herguist	35
41	Birni	350

Nos.	Noms des Villages.	Nombre de Maisons.
42	Chahkesbenk	25
43	Khist-Khank	28
44	Kezank	30
45	Koman	45
46	Hartek	25
47	Hargork	40
48	Metchrèn	30
49	Guedank	45
50	Maghenk	18
51	Patzi	150
52	Pevi	65
	Total	3,740

Observation.—Suivant les mœurs antiques du pays chaque maison contient de 100 à 30 âmes.

Inclosure 2 in No. 288.

Mr. Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 25, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 6th instant, transmitting a list of the villages destroyed during the disturbances in the Sassoon district, as supplied by the Armenian Patriarchate.

I am sending a copy of this list to Mr. Shipley at Moush, requesting him to furnish me with his observations on it at his earliest convenience; and as the Commission of Inquiry is to visit the Sassoon district, he will be in a position to clear up the doubts which still exist as to the number and population of the villages in question. The list inclosed in my despatch of the 27th December, 1894, does not claim to be in any respect a complete or accurate one; twenty-three of the villages which figure upon it out of twenty-eight are to be found in the list of fifty-two villages supplied by the Patriarchate, which includes many of the villages of Gharzan, which, so far as I know, have not suffered in the recent disturbances. Other inaccuracies are to be noted, such as the reckoning of Talori (No. 22) as one village of 700 houses, whereas the Nahié is well known to consist of seven villages, the total number of houses in which is probably far less than 700, and some of these villages figure separately further on in the list. The estimate of thirty to 100 souls to each house is also a gross exaggeration; the largest household of which I have yet heard in Sassoon numbered about sixty souls, and the average would not be over twelve. On the whole, I consider that it would be well to accept the Patriarchate's figures with considerable reserve in this and similar cases, pending careful inquiry and confirmation from independent sources.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 289.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 175.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 20, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to reported disturbances at Palou.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 289.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 3, 1895.

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 9th ultimo, inquiring as to serious disturbances which were said to have occurred at Palou, I have the honour to report that a Turk has just arrived at Erzeroum from that place, who gives the following account of what has occurred there:—

It appears that the Kaïmakam, on receipt of information that arms and ammunition were concealed in the Armenian village of Hauap, at about 5 miles distance from Palou, sent five zaptiehs and ten Kurds to act as watchmen in the village, while twenty-six of the inhabitants were lodged in Palou gaol, besides three or four more from each of several neighbouring villages.

Notwithstanding these arrests, up to the date of my informant's leaving Palou, on the 18th February, no judicial inquiry nor search for arms had yet been made by the authorities.

I had the honour to report the substance of the above to your Excellency, by telegraph, to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 290.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 176.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 20, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the hostility of Mussulmans to Christians at Baiburt and Tchipod.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 290.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 8, 1895.

THE following incidents have been reported to me as illustrative of the present temper of the Mussulman population towards their Christian neighbours.

At Baiburt, on Tuesday the 26th ultimo, while the Armenians were assembled in church, a number of Turks collected, with the intention of attacking them. Fortunately, Yahya Pasha, the General Commanding the Redifs of the Division, was informed in time, and at once dispatched a detachment of troops, who dispersed the Turks and so averted possible bloodshed.

Nearly a month ago, at the village of Tchipod in the Ispir Caza, a quarrel arose between Turks and Christians, in consequence, it is said, of some of the former having driven their flocks to feed on the growing crops of the latter. The Turks fell upon the Christians and killed three of them, several others being wounded. They also threatened that, if any of them ventured to complain to the authorities, a general massacre would take place; the result being that the news of the affray has only been brought to Erzeroum within the last two or three days.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 291.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 178.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March 20, 1895.*

SOME days ago the Sultan addressed a letter to the Porte stating that Mr. Pears, correspondent of the "Daily News" at Constantinople, had been the means of communicating to the "Temps" certain information respecting the arrest of fifteen young Armenians, and the part taken by 300 Kurds in the Sassoon affair, a telegram to the same effect having appeared in the "Daily News."

His Imperial Majesty accordingly ordered the Porte to address the Embassy for Mr. Pears' removal, on the ground that the Ottoman Government has a right to demand the expulsion of any person publishing matter obnoxious to it.

Said Pasha mentioned the matter privately to Mr. Block, my First Dragoman, adding that he would be glad if it could be arranged by Mr. Pears denying that he was the author of the statement. I did not, however, feel inclined to take any notice of this suggestion officially.

The question of this right of the Porte to expel foreigners from Turkey formed the subject of correspondence between Sir William White and Lord Salisbury in 1890 (Sir William White's No. 525 of the 6th December, 1890, and Lord Salisbury's No. 342 of the 16th December, 1890), in which his Lordship approved the view that if the Porte desired to expel a British subject for conduct not amenable to criminal law, the sufficiency of the reasons for expulsion should be discussed between the British and Ottoman authorities, but that if the ground assigned were cognizable by criminal law, the Porte would be bound to prosecute the accused persons.

Mr. Block informed Said Pasha, when the matter was first mentioned by his Excellency, that Her Majesty's Government held this view, and stated, by my instructions, that this Embassy could take no cognizance of complaints founded on statements in a French newspaper.

As the Sublime Porte have not up to this date communicated to me copies of the newspapers complained of, which they state have been mislaid, I have hopes that the matter may be allowed to drop.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 292.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 180.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March 21, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 63 of the 24th January on the subject of the Protestant school at Ordou, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copies of two communications which I have received from Mr. Dwight on the subject.

That of the 9th March reports a regrettable incident which took place on the occasion of the opening of the school on the 4th, in accordance with an order from the Grand Vizier, when the building was assaulted by a mob of Orthodox Greeks, and completely wrecked. I at once represented the state of affairs to the Grand Vizier, and his Highness assured me that the matter would be looked into, and the proper measures taken. Mr. Dwight now informs me, in his letter of the 18th instant, that the question is apparently settled, and this time, it may be hoped, definitively, the Municipality of the town having bought the Protestant parsonage for 800*l.*, and the Protestants having been authorized to build both church and school upon the site assigned to them.

The Greeks have been called upon to pay 150*l.* to the Municipality for the injuries inflicted upon the building by the mob.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 292.

Rev. H. Dwight to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Bible House, Constantinople, March 9, 1895.*

REFERRING to your Excellency's letter of the 21st February respecting the orders of the Grand Vizier for the opening of the Protestant school at Ordou, I have to narrate the following new incident:—

On the 3rd March the Governor of Ordou communicated to the Protestants the Vizirial order for the opening of their school. On the 4th March the school was opened. A mob, composed largely of women, immediately assaulted the place, and, in the presence of the police, ruined the building. The police did not interfere, except to order the Protestants to make no resistance. The Governor stood at a distance observing, while the mob destroyed windows, window-frames, iron shutters, benches, books, and all the school furniture. He then telegraphed the outrage to the Governor-General at Trebizond, and sent stringent orders to the Protestants to preserve a patient attitude.

When the pastor, M. Philadelpheus, was here, I asked him at some length concerning the state of feeling between the Orthodox Greeks and the Protestant Greeks. He assured me that they were on the best of terms, adding that, even during the riots of last May, the Greeks were on friendly terms with them during the week, exchanging calls, &c., and explaining that they were obliged to show hostility on Sundays because ordered to do so. M. Philadelpheus was of opinion that, barring the bitter feelings of a few leading men, there was no passion of fanaticism in Ordou which would resist an order that the Government evidently proposed to execute. He was, in short, of opinion that the Governor-General did not intend then (in May 1894) to have the order executed which he had given in favour of Protestant worship.

The Greeks of Ordou have now formally made demand to have Protestant worship and the Protestant school excluded from Ordou.

It appears to me that this new incident ought not to be left unpunished. There is not the slightest danger of an outbreak leading to bloodshed, except in an attitude of the Ottoman authority, which holds the Protestants in an apparently pusillanimous position, while giving the Greeks a free hand to do anything that they choose in the way of persecuting them.

Aside from the matter of punishment of the instigators of this new crime, it would seem that the Porte, for the sake of its own dignity, would force the Governor-General of Trebizond to instal the Protestant school in this building, and to protect it there. It is not too much to say that if the question related to a Mahommedan school, the Sublime Porte would settle it permanently within twenty-four hours, and that without public disturbance.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY O. DWIGHT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 292.

Rev. H. Dwight to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Bible House, Constantinople, March 18, 1895.*

THE question of the Protestant school at Ordou is apparently settled, thanks to your Excellency's efforts in behalf of justice.

On the 9th March the Governor of Ordou caused the Municipality of that town to buy the Protestant parsonage for 800*l.*, to be paid in four instalments within twelve months. He then authorized the Protestants to build at once both church and school upon the site already assigned to the Protestants for the church, an additional lot having been added to this site in order to make room for the school. Work is now going on upon the foundations of these buildings.

The Protestants feel that they have been compelled against their will to accept the note of the Municipality instead of ready money for the building, but they hope that the assurances of the local and provincial authorities will be fulfilled in regard to the matter of payment in due season, so that the work of building will not be retarded at any time.

The Greeks have been made to pay 150*l.* to the Municipality for the injuries inflicted upon the building by the mob.

Renewing my expression of appreciation of the untiring efforts which have led to a vindication of the Protestant right to worship and educate their children in Ordou, I remain, &c.

(Signed) HENRY O. DWIGHT.

No. 203.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 182.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March 21, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, inclosing copy of a despatch from Mr. Shipley which transmits Protocols Nos. 9 to 17 inclusive of the sittings of the Sassoun Commission of Inquiry from the 4th to the 13th ultimo.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 203.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, March 13, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Mr. Shipley, British Delegate with the Commission of Inquiry at Moush, inclosing Protocols Nos. 9 to 17 inclusive of the sittings of the Commission, from the 4th to the 13th ultimo.

Mr. Shipley, in his covering despatch, gives an exhaustive analysis of the evidence taken by the Commission, with observations on the way in which the Turkish Commissioners are endeavouring to conduct the inquiry, and the impression produced upon himself and his colleagues, with which I venture to express my entire agreement, without offering any further comment of my own for the present.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 203.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, March 4, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith the joint Reports of the Consular Delegates, Nos. 9 to 17 inclusive, of the proceedings at the sittings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry of the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, and 13th February respectively.

The two witnesses heard at the sitting of the Commission of the 4th February (Report No. 9) were Major Fevzi Effendi, the officer referred to in my despatch of the 4th February last, as having been in command of the zaptiehs sent to investigate the circumstances attending the attack by the Armenians, of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan upon the Velikanli Kurds near the first-mentioned village; and Hadji Mustapha Effendi, Captain in command of the detachment of troops, stationed at Merghémouzan, near the village of Shenik.

The evidence of Fevzi Effendi was in the main nothing but a confirmation of the account already given of the above-mentioned affair by his subordinates. It is, however, perhaps worthy of note that, according to his statement, the Armenians of Shenik, while attributing the cause of the quarrel to thefts committed by the Kurds, consented to restore the cattle of the latter out of consideration for the Government.

The deposition of Mustapha Effendi, who appears to have been sent to Merghémouzan with his detachment about the beginning of July last (o. s.), consists principally of the enumeration of the murders which, according to him, were committed by Armenians, of three Kurds, viz.:—

1. A Khianli Kurd.
2. The son of Amo, a Hoshkanli.
3. Hadji Agha, a Bekiranli Kurd; accompanied by the mutilation of their corpses.

The other statements of importance of Mustapha Effendi are, that the villagers of Shenik and Semal had evacuated their villages the day after his arrival at Merghémouzan, that it was they themselves who set fire to their villages with a view to revolt, and that their proceedings in this respect were part of a preconcerted plan to attack and destroy his own detachment. The Armenians even, the witness states, came to within a short distance of the encampment, but retired on finding the soldiers on their guard.

The evidence of Mustapha Effendi is, however, unsatisfactory in this respect, as it is almost impossible, from the vague nature of the dates given by him, to fix the time of the very important event of the evacuation of the villages of Semal, Shenik, and Ghelié-Guzan, and it is, I think, particularly noteworthy that he professes to be entirely ignorant of an attack by the Kurds on the village of Shenik, such as that recounted by Erko in his deposition of the 1st February (Report No. 7).

The sitting of the 5th February (Report No. 10) was occupied by the reading of judicial documents and by the evidence of an Armenian named Serkis, of Shenik, a cousin of Erko, who had been produced by the Commission, with a view of showing that his wife and two daughters named Mairo and Aivan and Shushan respectively, had not been killed at Ghelié-Hangevi, as stated by Erko, but had died from illness in their own home or elsewhere. The evidence given by Serkis was, in fact, a contradiction of that given by Erko; but as I shall have to refer to it in a subsequent Report, I would only at present call your attention to the following points:—

1. That he, Serkis, first stated that his wife died at Tapik, and subsequently, that it was at Shenik, on her return there.

2. That, until his attention was called by the President to the statement of Erko, he made no mention of his daughters Aivan and Shushan.

3. His unwillingness to give an account of his own movements during the events that occurred after the soldiers had attacked Shenik, as evidenced by the fact that, when questioned where he was at Mariam Perhiz (the fast of the Virgin Mary) a date, it will be remembered, fixed by Erko as having occurred during the events on the Antok Mountain, he professed himself ignorant as to what such a feast was.

At the subsequent confrontation of Erko with Serkis, both maintained their previous declarations, Erko, however, making the very grave accusation that Serkis had been tampered with by the authorities, and that free access to the Commission was not allowed to the Armenians.

At the sitting of the 6th February (Report No. 11), the evidence of the Gregorian priest, Parsegh, of Moush, who appears to be an informer, was taken, and consisted mainly, as will be seen, of an account of the origin of the troubles in the Sassoon district, which was ascribed by him mainly to the agitation set on foot by Nerses, Bishop of Moush, Damadian, and lastly, Mourad. As the statement of the priest Parsegh, with reference to a conversation, which he alleges he had held with the Armenian Tavo, of Semal, has been subsequently shown to be false, the wholesale accusations, which, it will be observed, he makes, against prominent Armenians of Moush and district, of being engaged at the present moment in seditious practices against the Government, cease to have much value. I would, however, note that his testimony was felt at the time both by myself and colleagues to be open to the greatest suspicion, owing to the fact that he appeared to single out Erko in particular for denunciation, and that in giving an account of the conflicts during past years between Armenians and Kurds, the former were, according to him, in every case the aggressors, and that, while he remembered very well the circumstances that four Kurds were killed in one of these encounters, he appeared, until questioned by the Delegates, to have no knowledge of any losses that may have been sustained by the Armenians.

At the sitting of the 7th February (Report No. 12) the Delegates, for reasons which I have already had the honour to report to you in my telegram of the 8th of the same month, proposed to the Commission a visit to Husskeui in person, not only with a view of clearing up discrepancies in the account of Erko and that of Serkis, but also of taking evidence on various other important points. The Reports which I now send will, I trust,

justify the statements which I made in my telegram above referred to, viz., that the Commission appeared to be devoting itself to the task of showing by Government witnesses that the troubles of last year were due solely to the misconduct of the Armenians, the Kurds being in no way to blame. We felt, in fact, that as Erko and his brother Gourdjo had hitherto been absolutely the only witnesses who could be said to represent the Armenian side of the question, and as we saw no prospect whatever of obtaining further independent Armenian testimony, it was the intention of the Commission to present the case fully, from the Government point of view first, leaving it to the Armenians afterwards to make what representations they could on their own behalf. It was, therefore, equally as much with the hope of obtaining some independent Armenian testimony as of clearing up the points at issue between Erko and Serkis, that we proposed to the Commission to proceed to Hasskeui in person to investigate matters on the spot.

The evidence of Taleb Effendi was then taken relative to the various missions on which he had been sent by Government to the villages of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan, to obtain information as to the seditious agitation which, it was alleged, was being carried on in those villages, and Talori, by Damadian, and others. Taleb Effendi's deposition, which had evidently been prepared beforehand, was nothing but a statement of the case against the Armenians, from a Government point of view, and was clearly regarded as such by the Commissioners, as scarcely any question was put to him by the latter. I may mention that I put personally some questions to Taleb Effendi with reference to the troubles between the Talori people and the Kurds in the year 1893, but could succeed in obtaining no further information than that contained in the reply given in the Report, viz., that these troubles were caused by certain outrages committed by the Armenians of that district upon the Kurds. The further evidence of Taleb Effendi as to the events of 1894 was, it will be observed, chiefly hearsay, and need not, therefore, be dwelt upon. His statement, however, that the Kurdish villages of Sassoon, of which he gives the names of five, were friendly to the Armenians, is, I consider, valuable, as affording material for further investigation.

At the sitting of the Commission of the 8th February (Report No. 13), the latter communicated to us a reply in writing, of which we give a translation in full, negativing our proposal to visit Hasskeui, for reasons which I have already had the honour to communicate to you in summary in my telegram of the 10th February. The reply in question, repeating as it does the decision of the Commission to proceed in "chronological order," taking the evidence as to the origin of what the Turkish authorities regard as an armed rebellion of the Armenians first, bears out, I venture to think, the contention that the Commission was not desirous of touching upon the question of atrocities at present, more especially as it will be noticed that an early visit to Bitlis was then in contemplation, leaving entirely out of question the serious charges alleged by Erko against the Turkish troops, evidence as to which could obviously be more easily obtained in the Moush plain than at Bitlis. With reference to the expression made use of by the Commissioners in their reply, viz., "going to this village and that village," I may point out that our proposition was confined to a visit to Hasskeui only.

The witnesses heard at this sitting were Nadir Agha, a provision dealer of Moush, and the priests Garabed, Isaiah, and Egishé, of the Monastery of Tchanli. The evidence of the former does not contain much of interest, except that he states that already at the end of May last (o. s.), the Armenians of the villages of Kavar (Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan), in reply to his inquiry, informed him that they were being excited to revolt by the Armenians of Talori, who had become brigands. He also made the statement, which appeared to us extraordinary, that the witness Erko had said in his presence, and in that of others, some time after the events on the Antok Mountain, that if the soldiers of the detachment at Mergéuouzan had not been massacred by the inhabitants of the villages above referred to, it was due to him (Erko's) intercession.

The depositions of the priests Garabed, Isaiah, and Egishé, did not contribute much to the information already in the possession of the Commission. Their statements seemed rather to have reference to their personal grievances against Nersès, Bishop of Moush, against whom it appears they had at various times addressed Petitions to the Armenian Patriarchate, and their statement that the Archimandrite Isaiah saw at the residence of the Bishop at Moush the garments of a murdered Mussulman youth of Van, seems to me to be wholly incredible. Nevertheless, their account of the doings of the revolutionary agents in the Moush district agrees to a great extent with that already given by the priest Parsegh and Taleb Effendi.

Of more immediate interest as regards the events in Sassoon is the statement made by them in reply to a question by the Delegates, to the effect that the number of Kurds in

the habit of visiting the Talori and Kavar region amounts to 10,000 tents, but that this year, i.e., 1894, 5,000 or 6,000 only came. I have no means of ascertaining at present whether these numbers are exaggerated or not, but in view of the statements of previous witnesess, that the number of Kurds never exceeded 300 or 400, I think that the above estimate, given by a witness favourable to the Government, deserves attention.

At the sitting of the Commission of the 9th February (Report No. 14), the President read out certain judicial documents, containing an account of the trial at Bitlis of Mourad and his companions, captured at Talori. Their depositions, except that of Mourad, offered little interest, and it was not thought necessary by the Delegates to include them in the Report, especially as it had previously been formally stated by the President that the above persons would be examined before the Commission.

The deposition of Salih Agha, who appears to have acted temporarily as Inspector of Tithes, was then taken, and was mainly to the effect that, on the 12th July of last year (o. s.), the Armenians of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan had already retired to the mountains, and had closed the roads leading to Koulp and Khiyan. He states, also, that he was eye-witness of a combat between the Armenians and Kurds on the road to Moush, which lasted about two hours, but in which the only losses were two men killed on the Kurdish and one on the Armenian side.

With regard to this witness, as, in fact, to all those having any employment under Government, I may remark that their evidence invariably stops at a certain point, viz., the arrival of the soldiers at Ghelié-Guzan. Of the subsequent movements of the latter they profess to know nothing, though singularly well informed as to the events which preceded.

The testimony of Bedros Effendi consisted of a long statement as to the origin of the troubles in the Kavar district, which the witness asserted he had received from a mendicant, named Ohun, of Ghelié-Guzan, whom he had met at Perhak, a village near Moush, and who ascribed his misfortunes to the fact that he had opposed the evil designs of Damadian. According to his statement, a general rising of the Armenians of Moush, Van, Boulanik, and Varto was planned by Mourad in 1894, who counselled the villagers of Ghelié-Guzan, Shenik, and Semal to send their wives and children to the mountains as a preparatory step.

The only direct evidence which Bedross Effendi was able to give was that he had translated certain Proclamations for the Government, addressed, the witness alleged, by Nersès, the Bishop of Moush, to the Armenian population.

The sitting of the 11th February (Report No. 15) was occupied by the Commission in taking the depositions of Mustapha Agha, Nasrullah Agha, Halil Effendi, and Bederkhan Agha, the two former of whom deposed that, having purchased last year the tithes of Ghelié-Guzan, Semal, and Shenik, they were unable to collect them owing to the fact of those villages having been abandoned by their inhabitants.

The depositions of Halil Effendi and Bederkhan Agha, sent in the middle of August last (o. s.) to report on the above matters, were, as will be seen, to the effect that the district was almost in a state of open war. The testimony of Halil Effendi is important as showing that at the date above mentioned the troops were already at Ghelié-Guzan.

At the sitting of the 12th February (Report No. 16) the Commissioners, on the renewal by the Consular Delegates of the proposition to visit Hasskeui, declared themselves ready to start at once.

The visit in question, however, for reasons which I had the honour to communicate to you in my telegram of the 12th February, was deferred, the Delegates understanding that certain important witnesses from Semal and Shenik, referred to by Erko, had presented themselves to the Commission for examination.

The deposition of Hatcho, son of Manouk, of Shenik, who fled to the Antok Mountain four days after the other inhabitants of the villages, was then taken. As will be seen, it does not differ very essentially from the account already given by Erko as to the causes which led to the retreat of the villagers to the mountain, except that the witness who, it is necessary to bear in mind, had been summoned by the Government, attributed the conflicts between the Armenians and Kurds to the consequences of the agitation which had been carried on by Mourad. In one very important respect, however, he differs from Erko, viz, in that he states that they were not attacked while on the Antok Mountain, nor were they pursued while flying, and that, as far as he himself knew, there was nobody killed. The witness, it will be noted, ascribed the flight in different directions of the Armenians on the mountain solely to want of food.

At the sitting of the Commission of the following day (Report No. 17), the deposition of Sako, of Shenik, the first of the witnesses referred to in the previous Protocol, was taken.

The allegations brought by Sako against the troops are, it will at once be seen, of the most serious nature, for, like Erko, he accuses them of bayonetting defenceless persons on the Antok Mountain. Sako's account, it will be observed, is very circumstantial, and in estimating the amount of credence to be attached to his story, it must be borne in mind that, among others, he recounts the death of members of his own family, and that, moreover, as in the case of the two children, Ghiro and Manoushak, abandoned on the mountain, he gives names of persons who could be called to verify his statements. It will also be observed that, with reference to the account given of the death of the priest Ohannes, with others at Ghelié-Guzan, he states that his own nephew was among those put to death. With regard, however, to his statement that there was at no time any resistance on the part of the Armenians, it is, I think, not true, and in this respect Erko's account would seem to be more to be relied upon. It should be remembered, however, that Armenians are not likely to be ready to admit before Representatives of the Government that they fired upon the Imperial troops.

With regard to the probable issue of the Inquiry, it would perhaps at the present stage be premature to speak. Nevertheless, with the information in our possession, as furnished by the remainder of the witnesses referred to in Report No. 16 of the 13th February, a summary of which I had the honour to communicate to you in my telegrams of the 16th February, and the 1st and 2nd March respectively, the conviction is being gradually forced upon myself and colleagues that, even putting aside for the moment the question of the slaughter by the troops of defenceless persons, an amount of misery and suffering has been inflicted upon the Armenians of the villages of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan, wholly out of proportion to any offences of which they may have been guilty.

The number of Armenians on the Antok Mountain was estimated by Mustapha Effendi, the Officer in Command of the detachment of troops at Merghémouzan (Report No. 9) as 3,000 in all, and it is not contested by the Turkish authorities themselves that all these people, or those that survived of them, are now homeless, and the greater part of them absolutely without means of subsistence.

The above, moreover, it is to be noted, is entirely independent of the villages of Talori proper, on which the Commission has, as yet, hardly touched.

With regard to the question of sedition among the Armenians, the case is somewhat different. A political agitation of some kind or other seems undoubtedly to have been carried on by Danadian, and, after him, by Mourad, though even here the only act of overt rebellion against constituted authority, brought to the notice of the Commission, seems to have been the attack made by the inhabitants of Akkesser and Talori upon Ismail Effendi, Kaïmakam of Koulp, referred to by Mustapha Effendi (Report No. 9), unless an attack, which is alleged by Salih Agha (Report No. 14) to have been meditated upon the Kaïmakam of Sassoon, be counted as such.

It is more difficult to arrive at a conclusion with regard to the outrages alleged to have been committed by Armenians upon Kurds. That certain of the latter have been killed by Armenians is, I believe, true; but neither myself nor my colleagues feel satisfied, from the evidence which has come before us, that it was the Armenians who gave the provocation; and it is in this respect that the absence of independent and impartial testimony, of which as yet we have had none, makes itself most keenly felt. The fact is, however, significant, in connection with these alleged outrages, viz., that nearly the whole of them appear to have been committed upon the nomad Kurds, one or two cases only being instanced of an attack upon the Kurds resident in the villages. I should, perhaps, add the number of these outrages is not large, and that the fact that the corpses were mutilated by Armenians has not yet been shown entirely to our satisfaction.

In concluding my Report I beg to call your attention to the suggestions which we have thought it necessary to make to the Commission with a view to, as far as possible, insuring an impartial hearing for Armenians who may be called upon to give evidence.

The first one is that, as the majority of Armenian witnesses are Gregorians, it would be only just that one of the Dragomans should be a person in whom they would have confidence; and to that end we proposed (Report 11) that some one should be chosen from their own community. This was agreed to by the President, and a second person added. The latter, however, not proving satisfactory, was replaced by Mardiros Agha, a member of the Armenian Administrative Council, who acted for some time, but was subsequently declared by the President to be unsuitable, for reasons known to the Government. As various other persons who, on the invitation of the Commission, were proposed by ourselves, were also declared to be unacceptable, the services of Avedis Agha, an elected Armenian member of the Moush Municipality, have been enlisted by the Commission. I should point out, however, that the want of a Dragoman of our own, understanding Armenian and Kurdish, has been felt by us to be a very serious drawback.

The second suggestion to which I refer, and which has also been adopted by the Commission (Report No. 13) is that Armenians having Petitions to present with reference to the affair at Sassoon, shall at once be admitted before the Commissioners, their Petitions read out in the presence of the Consular Delegates, and registered in the journal of the proceedings of the Commission for subsequent investigation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 3 in No. 293.

Procès-verbal No. 9 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 4, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Le premier témoin introduit est le "Tabour Aghassi" (Chef de Bataillon de zaptiés), Fevzi Effendi, dont le récit confirme les dépositions de ses subordonnés Iskender Agha, Saad Ullah, *alias* Saïd Agha, et Medjid Agha, entendus dans les séances du 29 et 30 Janvier dernier, en ce qui concerne le récit à eux fait par les Kurdes Velikanli des attaques dont ces derniers avaient été l'objet dans les derniers jours de Juillet (v. s.) 1894. Le témoin ajoute que la femme Kurde dont il a été question et qu'il a vu n'a pas été dépouillée de ses vêtements, mais seulement de ses bijoux de cou et de tête.

Il confirme également les déclarations précédentes relatives à la nuit passée par lui et ses hommes à Merghémouzan, où il avait jugé utile de se rendre directement, ayant remarqué au cours de sa route vers Chenik que des Arméniens se promenaient armés sur les flancs de l'Antok Dagh, et ayant appris de plus que ce village et celui de Semal, desquels il ne montait aucun bruit, avaient été désertés.

Il confirme en général les récits faits par ses subordonnés précités ayant trait à leurs pourparlers avec les Arméniens de Chenik, et ajoute qu'il s'enquit auprès des villageois qu'il avait réussi à se faire amener, et qu'il déclara être le témoin Erko dont la déposition intégrale se trouve dans le procès-verbal No. 7 de la séance du 1er Février, des motifs de la conduite des Arméniens; il en reçut la réponse qu'elle devait être attribuée aux inimitiés survenues entre eux et les Kurdes à cause de vols de bestiaux et des querelles qui s'en étaient suivies. Le témoin blâma cette façon d'agir en disant qu'il était venu de la part de l'autorité pour faire une enquête, que s'il se produisait des plaintes, il y serait donné suite, et obtint des Arméniens qui déclarèrent le faire par égard pour le Gouvernement, la restitution, dans les conditions antérieurement racontées par ses subordonnés, des bestiaux pris aux Kurdes.

Le témoin nie que le Kurde Simonen Oghlou lui ait affirmé que les Arméniens aient été mis hors la loi ("fermanli"), mais il reconnaît lui avoir entendu dire qu'ils étaient des brigands et des rebelles.

Le témoin termine en affirmant qu'au cours des deux rixes, ci-dessus rappelées, les Kurdes se sont trouvés dans une situation inférieure, leurs fusils ne portant pas aussi loin que ceux de leurs aggresseurs Arméniens.

Le deuxième témoin est Hadji Mustapha Effendi, "Kol-Aghassi" (Capitaine) d'infanterie et Commandant des deux compagnies en détachement à Merghémouzan.

La déposition est faite d'un seul trait et semblerait avoir été rédigée d'avance; attendu qu'elle contient un ensemble d'accusations d'actes de cruauté qui auraient été commis par les Arméniens sur les Kurdes et relatés dans des rapports spéciaux adressés par le témoin à ses chefs hiérarchiques, les Délégués Consulaires ont cru nécessaire de donner *in extenso* cette déposition:—

"Avant d'aller à Merghémouzan," déclare le témoin, interrogé sur ce qu'il sait des événements de la fin du mois de Juillet (v. s.) 1894, "je me suis rendu sur ordre dans le Caza de Koulp, dont certains villages Musulmans avaient été l'objet d'actes arbitraires de la part des villages avoisinants de Talori. Quelque temps avant mon arrivée à Koulp le Caïmacam Ismaïl Effendi s'était transporté au village d'Akkesser, voisin de Talori, pour y faire une enquête sur les agissements de même nature. A son retour et même pendant son séjour à Akkesser une grande partie des habitants de ce dernier endroit se réunissant aux gens de Talori, se portèrent à une attaque contre ce même Caïmacam dans l'intention de le tuer, et mettant à profit la nuit obscure ils se sauvèrent; un zaptié fut blessé, à ce que me raconta le Caïmacam une fois revenu à Passour.

"Le lendemain, sur ces entrefaites et sur un second ordre reçu, je partis avec mes compagnies pour Merghémouzan.

"Le lendemain de notre arrivée le Caïmacam de Sassoon, Sulémian Rakim Effendi, vint me raconter que les habitants de Chenik et Semal avaient vidé leurs villages et s'étaient retirés à l'Antok Dagh; ce récit du Caïmacam concordait avec mes informations personnelles recueillies de droite et de gauche.

"Deux jours après, le Tchaouch de Planton vint me trouver avec un homme portant la barbe et me dit: 'Il y a à la porte un mort, des Kurdes et une femme; venez voir en quel état est le cadavre.' Avant de me déranger, je me renseignai: on me répondit: 'C'est un Kurde de la tribu des Khiauli et habitant dans le voisinage de Merghémouzan; ayant perdu deux bœufs, il était allé les chercher dans les pâturages d'été d'Antok; ses parents ne le voyant pas rentrer le soir partirent à sa recherche et le trouvèrent mort sur les flancs de la montagne; venez voir la femme de vos propres yeux.' Le docteur, Mustapha Effendi, était venu à notre campement examiner les soldats. Le prenant avec moi nous allâmes à la porte du corps de garde; une femme était assise, pleurant à côté du cadavre. Je fis relever le tapis qui le recouvrait; il avait les yeux crevés, les oreilles, le nez, et les lèvres coupés, et à la nuque une grave blessure. Dans la main de l'homme qui relevait le tapis je vis les organes de la génération. 'Pourquoi tiens-tu cela,' lui dis-je, 'et d'où cela vient-il?' Cet homme, qui était un parent du mort, me répondit les avoir sortis de la bouche du cadavre, où on les avait placés. Le médecin s'étant acquitté de son examen médical en fit un rapport envoyé en son temps avec mon rapport personnel.

"Le lendemain, étant allé du côté de Chenik avec le Lieutenant Ali et le chirurgien Halil Effendi, j'envoyai par l'intermédiaire d'un berger dire aux gens du village où nous étions arrivés que je voulais leur parler. A cette nouvelle les Chenikli Kirkor, Sako, et Erko étant venus, je leur fis savoir ce qui s'était passé la veille et leur demandai qui étaient les auteurs de pareils méfaits. Ils me répondirent n'en rien savoir. Je leur fis entendre les admonestations nécessaires en ajoutant: 'Il faut trouver ceux qui commettent de semblables crimes; s'il y a quelqu'un parmi vous qui vous pousse dans cette voie, vous devez le dénoncer, et il est nécessaire que vous fassiez connaître sans retard les motifs pour lesquels vous avez abandonné votre village, car cela finira mal pour vous!' Leur ayant donné des conseils de cette nature, je m'en revins. Quelques jours après, ce même Kirkor que j'avais fait venir précédemment, se portant, en compagnie des gens de Chenik et Semal, à une attaque contre les gens de Simonen Oghlou, campée à la montagne de Kourtik à trois heures de Moush, s'emparèrent de leurs biens et les blessèrent eux-mêmes et s'étant rassemblés revinrent à l'Antok Dagh.

"Après un intervalle de quelques jours, le fils d'Amo, de la tribu de Khochekanli, était allé seul dans la forêt, y fut assailli par les Arméniens qui le tuèrent, lui écorchèrent la peau jusqu'à l'abdomen à ce que me reconta son père. A la suite de cette information, comme notre Capitaine-médecin Ibrahim Effendi était à Moush, j'envoyai son remplaçant le chirurgien Halil Effendi, faire l'enquête. A son retour il me raconta qu'il avait vu la mère embrassant le cadavre et poussant des gémissements. Sur le désir du père, le chirurgien fit son rapport qu'il me remit et que j'envoyai au Commandant.

"Sept jours après, on apporte à l'endroit où nous nous trouvions le cadavre de Hadji Aghn, neveu d'Omer Aghn, de la tribu des Bekiranli et venu aux pâturages d'été. Nous vîmes qu'on lui avait ouvert le ventre et qu'on avait fait éclater le cadavre après l'avoir rempli de poudre. Le rapport nécessaire fut présenté au Commandant.

"Le lendemain à l'aurore, sur la nouvelle qui m'en fut donnée par le Planton de service, qu'on apercevait de la fumée montant de Chenik et Semal, j'envoyai en toute hâte le Lieutenant Ali Effendi avec quinze hommes pour s'assurer de la cause de la fumée qui se voyait dans ces villages. En y arrivant ils virent que chaque village avait été incendié et que de derrière le village, quinze Arméniens environ se sauvaient vers la forêt.

"Le Lieutenant Ali me reconta qu'il avait examiné ces villages, qu'il avait vu que la fumée montait de chacun d'eux et que du derrière du village des Arméniens se sauvaient dans la direction de la forêt, que personne ne se trouvait là qu'eux seuls et que les villageois avaient mis le feu aux villages dans une pensée de révolte. Il raconta en outre que de retour de la montagne à Semal il en avait vu toutes les maisons incendiées, sans âme qui vive.

"Le lendemain, le Caïmacam, Sulémian Rakim Effendi, vint me dire que les gens de Kegushin Chouchmanerg, Tupik, Kop, et Kermal, villages situés à une distance d'une heure, une heure et demie de Chenik, Semal, et Ghélie-Guzan, étaient allés lui déclarer: 'Si les gens de ces trois derniers villages se mettent d'accord avec nous, nous nous emparerons des agitateurs aussi bien de ceux venus du dehors que de ceux se trouvant au dedans et nous les remettrons à l'autorité.' Ce même Caïmacam m'a dit que les habitants des villages en question n'avaient subi aucune perte, et je sais que ceux des autres villages sont restés en parfaite tranquillité.

"Le lendemain soir nous vîmes l'Antok Dagh éclairé de feux nombreux; chaque soir ils étaient allumés, mais pas en aussi grande quantité. Cependant les gens de Chenik et Semal avaient pris la résolution définitive d'anéantir mes deux compagnies: en effet, ils voulaient tuer les soldats d'abord et disaient: 'Faisons disparaître nos récoltes: nous tuerons ensuite les soldats.' Ils auraient alors incendié leurs maisons de leurs propres mains. Quant à leur résolution de tuer les soldats un Kurde de Sassoon m'en avisa au moyen d'un zaptié, en nous donnant le conseil de ne pas dormir cette nuit-là: nous restâmes sur le qui-vive jusqu'au matin. Les Arméniens vinrent jusque derrière la hauteur où nous nous trouvions; nous entendions leurs voix. Quoi qu'il en soit, nous voyant sur nos gardes, ils ajournèrent leurs projets.

"Deux jours après, le Commandant de la Division arriva avec le Colonel et des détachements."

Le témoin ajoute qu'au mois d'Octobre, un nommé Tavo, de Semal, vint le trouver pour lui demander l'autorisation de faire sortir leurs affaires des fosses où ils les avaient enfoncées, et sur lesquelles ils avaient semé, ce qui prouverait, de l'avis du témoin, qu'ils nourrissaient de longue date des pensées de révolte.

Le témoin, invité à préciser une date, à partir de laquelle on puisse faire courir la série d'événements, racontés par lui, répond qu'il n'en a pas de présente à la mémoire, mais que la conversation à lui tenue par le Caïmacam de Koulp doit être placée dans les premiers jours de Juillet (v. s.) 1894.

Il évalue à 3,000 le rassemblement des Arméniens venus des villages des alentours de Sassoon, des villages de Khian, de Kizil Agatch, et Hasskeui, ces deux derniers situés dans la plaine de Moush.

Sur la demande des Délégués Consulaires, il déclare formellement n'avoir ni vu, ni entendu parler d'une attaque opérée par un millier de Kurdes sur le village de Chenik postérieurement aux deux rixes entre les Kurdes Velikanli et les Arméniens; mais il ajoute qu'il a empêché au moyen de ses soldats un combat qui faillit avoir lieu entre une cinquantaine d'Arméniens et une cinquantaine de Kurdes Badikanlis, se portant au secours d'une soixantaine de Karikanlis de leur tribu, attaqués par les dits Arméniens.

Le Président clôt la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 4 in No. 203.

Procès-verbal No. 10 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 5, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Le Président donne lecture:—

1. D'une série de plaintes adressées par les Kurdes au Mutessarifat de Moush, relatives à des actes d'agression et de cruautés commis sur leurs tribus par les Arméniens: aucune suite n'ayant été donnée par l'autorité judiciaire qui en avait reçu communication, le Président décide d'en faire demander la raison à qui de droit: la plupart d'entre elles est d'ailleurs postérieure aux événements de Sassoon.

2. De pièces officielles émanées des autorités locales, la plus importante est le télégramme du Mutessarif de Guendj, du 3 (15) Mai, 1894, qui signale au Vali de Bitlis les agissements des Arméniens de Talori, se promenant armés dans la montagne, se livrant à des conciliabules avec les gens de Kavar, c'est-à-dire, Chenik, Semal, et Ghélié-Guzan, et qui demande un envoi de troupes.

Le Président fait introduire le nommé Serkis, cousin du témoin Erko, entendu dans la séance du 1er Février, Procès-verbal No. 7. La Commission l'a fait rechercher par le Mutessarif; il est actuellement hospitalisé à Hasskeui, village situé à trois heures dans la plaine de Moush.

Le témoin Serkis se déclare paysan de Chenik, âgé de 20 ans, marié à la nommée Marian, ayant deux filles: Zeri, âgée de 20 ans, Hanguine, de 15 ans.

Interrogé sur l'endroit où se trouvent ces membres de sa famille, il répond que sa femme est morte au mois d'Août dernier au village de Tapik, district de Shatak, où elle était allée pour voir sa sœur, et que la nouvelle lui en a été apportée par sa belle-sœur à lui, nommée Rebo, femme de son père Mardiros. Les deux filles sont maintenant avec lui à Hasskeui, où se trouvent également de nombreux réfugiés de Chenik, dont il ne peut dire le nom, et parmi lesquels il n'y a pas d'autres parents d'Erko.

Interrogé s'il a d'autres filles, il répond négativement. Le Président lui dit alors que la Commission a connaissance de deux autres enfants à lui qui se nommeraient Chouchan et Aïvan. Il répond qu'il avait, en effet, deux filles de ce nom : Chouchan de 10 ans et Aïvan de 5 à 6 ans, qui sont mortes à Chenik. Longuement questionné sur les détails de la mort de sa femme et de ses filles, il ressort de ses réponses : que la première avec ses enfants ayant eu peur, s'était enfui devant les soldats et les Kurdes à Passour, d'où elles retournèrent avec lui à Chenik ; les deux filles succombèrent toutes deux à une maladie qui dura quatre ou cinq jours ; l'aînée avant la mère et la cadette après. Il reconnaît Erko, de Chenik, pour son cousin, mais leurs demeures et leurs biens sont séparés. Le frère de ce dernier, Govadjo, est actuellement en prison ; il en ignore la cause.

Interrogé si Erko a un autre frère nommé Artin, il répond négativement ; si lui-même n'a pas un cousin de ce nom, il répond affirmativement : "On l'a tué ;" il ne sait pas qui. A sa connaissance le dit Artin avait un fils nommé Aram, âgé d'à peu près 2 ans, qui est mort avec les femmes quand elles fuyaient. Il ne connaît dans sa famille aucun autre enfant du nom de Bedros, ou de Vartan (le premier ayant été indiqué par Erko, comme son propre fils à lui, Serkis, et le second comme celui d'Arlin, et tous deux tués au cours des événements.

Il déclare tour à tour : (1) être parti dans la direction de Diarbekir après les événements de Sassoon ; (2) ne pas s'y être rendu à cette époque, mais y être allé auparavant pour le commerce des moutons.

Interrogé, dans le but d'en obtenir une date précise relative à l'endroit où il se trouvait pendant le Mariam Perhiz (Jeûne de la Vierge) époque citée par Erko comme le moment des événements les plus importants, il nie savoir ce qu'est Mariam Perhiz.

Sur la proposition des Délégués Consulaires, Erko est confronté avec Serkis. Le Président fait connaître au premier les déclarations de son cousin, diamétralement opposées aux siennes en ce qui concerne la mort de Mariam et de ses deux filles. Erko confirme solennellement ses affirmations antérieures et déclare que si Serkis parle ainsi, c'est que l'autorité locale l'a menacé et acheté par l'intermédiaire du nommé Mamouk, de Chenik, en service chez un nommé Khalil Effendi à Moush : il refuse de dire de quelle source il tient cette information. Il ajoute que si les routes n'étaient pas fermées, la Chambre de la Commission serait remplie de plaintes et de requêtes.

Les Délégués Consulaires prient alors le Président de procéder aux enquêtes et de prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour assurer l'indépendance et la liberté des opérations de la Commission. Le Président répond que c'est le devoir de la Commission, et que si pareille demande n'avait pas été formulée, il aurait pris lui-même cette initiative.

Il fait inclure dans le procès-verbal de la séance qu'au dire du témoin Erko, des empêchements étant apportés par les autorités locales au libre exercice de l'action de la Commission, cette dernière se livrera aux recherches nécessaires.

Avant de se retirer, Serkis déclare maintenir sa propre déposition qu'il est prêt à affirmer sous la foi du serment.

Le Président lève la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 5 in No. 293.

Procès-verbal No. 11 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 6, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Ceux-ci attirent l'attention du Président sur les défectuosités qu'ils ont remarquées dans la traduction faite par Tatéos Effendi de la déposition des témoins Erko et Serkis, et suggèrent l'idée à la Commission de remplacer ce Drogman par un autre, n'ayant aucune attache officielle, et qui, choisi dans le sein d'un des deux Conseils de la nation, pourrait inspirer une confiance complète aux témoins Arméniens.

Le Président, tout en déclarant que la mesure proposée ne lui paraît pas s'imposer sous cette forme, promet néanmoins d'aviser à ce qu'un second Drogman Arménien, qui pourra contrôler ou rectifier les traductions du premier, soit présent lors des dépositions ultérieures devant être faites en langue Arménienne.

Le témoin introduit est le nommé Parsegh, prêtre Arménien Grégorien de Moush,

qui, invité à faire connaître les renseignements qu'il possède sur les rassemblements des Arméniens de Kavar, Talori, et autres villages, et leur fuite dans l'Antok Dagh, dépose dans les termes suivants :—

Les Arméniens de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-guzan, Talori, Tchertin, Agpi, Ingounznak, et d'une vingtaine d'autres villages, sont de pauvres gens ignorants, dont les esprits ont été troublés par les agitateurs. Dans l'école Arménienne nommé Chirket-Mektebi (École de l'Association) et fondée à Moush, il y a une dizaine d'années, par la nation, se succédèrent en qualité de professeurs et de Directeurs les nommés Portokalian, Sarian, Mighrditch, Damadian Miliran, qui semèrent des ferments de révolte dans la population Arménienne, Sarian en faisant [*sic*] par les rues de la ville 200 enfants munis d'un drapeau, Damadian en poussant cette même population à prendre les armes. Destitué de ses fonctions après quelques années de séjour à Moush, il en partit pour Constantinople, où il se trouva mêlé aux événements de Coum-Capou, s'enfuit en Perse d'où il revint dans ce pays. Après être resté quelque temps à l'Évêché Arménien Grégorien de Moush, il se rendit à Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-guzan, pour en exciter les pauvres villageois, à qui il avait envoyé du plomb et de l'argent.

Damadian comptait douze compagnons, parmi lesquels Mourad, actuellement détenu à Bitlis, et un nommé Achot ; le témoin ignore le nom des autres. Dans les deux premiers villages précités, Damadian recevait l'hospitalité des nommés Sako, Erko, Michaïl, de Chenik, et de Tavo et Kirko son frère de Semal, emprisonné à Bitlis. Par l'intermédiaire de ces six individus, il excite les villageois à un tel point qu'ils auraient attaqué Moush, dont la population commença à s'inquiéter en disant : "Ils vont venir nous massacrer."

Le nommé Arabo se promenait dans les montagnes avec une troupe d'hommes armés ; et on venait ouvertement en armes chez l'Évêque Nersès. Au retour d'Arabo de Khinis ils tuèrent un Kurde dans le ravin de Kalémsh et se portèrent ensuite contre un village Kurde à une attaque, au cours de laquelle Arabo succomba.

Cette année, c'est-à-dire en 1894, les Arméniens d'une vingtaine de villages de Sassoon, parmi lesquels Chenik et Semal, furent avertis que les Arméniens de Sivas s'étaient révoltés et qu'en Perse ils avaient des troupes prêtes ; excités par ces nouvelles, les dits villageois, au nombre de quarante, armés de fusils à tir rapide, firent irruption sur les tentes des Kurdes, leur tuèrent quelques hommes et s'emparèrent de leurs bestiaux. Cette attaque n'aurait pas été à la connaissance du témoin motivée par un vol antérieur de même nature commis par les Kurdes au préjudice des Arméniens. Comme conséquence, les tribus Kurdes des alentours attaquèrent les villages de Chenik et Semal, et il s'ensuivit des rencontres très sérieuses. L'autorité locale informée de ces troubles, envoya des troupes pour y mettre fin ; avant leur arrivée, les Kurdes brûlèrent les maisons de ces villages. Les Arméniens avec Mourad voulaient attaquer les troupes ; mais quelques-uns d'entre eux commencèrent à supplier de ne pas le faire, en rappelant les mauvais traitements qui leur étaient prodigués par les Kurdes.

Le témoin certifie la véracité des renseignements ci-dessus énumérés, qu'il tient de certains individus, eux-mêmes mêlés aux événements.

Il ajoute que les Arméniens sont encore dans les mêmes sentiments ; qu'il y a des gens continuant à leur souffler des idées séditieuses, soit à Moush, soit dans les villages ; il n'en peut dire les noms devant la Commission, mais il les lui fera connaître par lettre signée. Sur l'insistance des Délégués Consulaires, il désigne les nommés : Mesrop, cabaretier, à Moush ; Avedis, prêtre, à Moush ; Nazareth Effendi, à Moush ; Ohannes Sirounian, à Moush, Président du Conseil Spirituel (il a, dit le témoin, tous les Arméniens de Moush dans sa main) ; Parsegh, Kiahia (Primat) de Hasskeui ; Vahan, Kiahia (Primat) de Alvarindj (sorti de prison en donnant de l'argent) ; Dikran Effendi, Directeur du "Chirket Mektebi."

Le témoin leur a entendu dire à eux-mêmes qu'ils réunissaient de l'argent et du plomb pour les envoyer dans les villages et peut montrer l'endroit où se fabrique actuellement de la poudre.

Le témoin a appris de Tavo, de Semal, qu'Erko avait été blessé non par les soldats mais par les Kurdes ; il ajoute que le dit Erko est venu lui demander de la poudre, du plomb, pour tirer sur les soldats ; il répéta cette déclaration en face d'Erko lui-même.

Le témoin, interrogé sur les mesures qu'il saurait avoir été prises par les autorités pour engager les Arméniens à rester dans la bonne voie, dit que le Lieutenant Ali Effendi, Taleb Effendi, et d'autres personnes encore, qui leur avaient été envoyés dans ce but, ont été chassés par eux. Lui-même a fait parvenir aux villages Arméniens dix communications écrites, et plusieurs d'entre eux tels que Kop, Kegoshin, Tchertin, et Chouchamerg ne se sont pas mêlés aux événements.

Le témoin reconnaît que des rixes constantes ont lieu entre Kurdes et Arméniens au

sujet de bestiaux tour à tour volés et repris ; au cours de l'une d'elles, trois ans auparavant, quatre Kurdes ont été tués par les villageois de Chenik et Semal.

Ce n'est que sur l'insistance des Délégués Consulaires que ce prêtre Arménien paraît se souvenir que quelques Arméniens auraient été victimes des Kurdes les années précédentes, mais il ne peut ni s'en rappeler le nombre ni préciser un cas particulier.

Le Président lève la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 6 in No. 293.

Procès-verbal No. 12 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 7, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Au début de la séance, les Délégués soumettent au Président la proposition suivante :—

Attendu que des dépositions et de la confrontation de deux témoins Arméniens nommés Erko et Serkis, ayant précédemment comparu, résultent des contradictions considérables sur des points de la plus haute importance, qu'au dire du nommé Serkis il existe dans le village de Hasskeui, sis à trois heures de Moush, un grand nombre de réfugiés de Chenik, les Délégués Consulaires demandent à la Commission de s'y transporter pour y recueillir sans aucune entrave les témoignages de ces réfugiés, hommes et femmes, soit relativement aux contradictions ci-dessus rappelées, soit aux événements de Sassoon, et de plus, pour ôter tout prétexte aux allégations produites devant la Commission d'Enquête et ayant trait à des tentatives d'intimidation ou d'excitation, les Délégués la prient de se rendre sans délai dans le dit village de Hasskeui.

Le Président donne acte aux Délégués de leur proposition, en la faisant insérer dans le procès-verbal de la séance, et remet au lendemain la réponse de la Commission.

Le témoin introduit est le nommé Taleb Effendi, qui, n'occupant pas actuellement de fonctions officielles, avait été chargé, en 1893, ainsi que le démontrent les documents existants, d'enquêtes relatives à des meurtres qui auraient été commis dans les montagnes par les Arméniens.

Invité par le Président à faire connaître soit ce qui touche les missions dont il s'est acquitté, soit ce qu'il sait relativement aux événements de Sassoon, il rappelle, en débutant, les agissements séditieux dont le récit a été fait par le prêtre Parsegh dans la séance précédente.

Il ajoute qu'au mois de Ramazan 1308, sur la dénonciation du fils d'un Notable Arménien de Moush, lequel signala à l'autorité locale des menées tout à fait révolutionnaires, telles que l'enrôlement de soldats, approvisionnement d'armes, &c., parmi les Arméniens des villages ; il leur fut envoyé par Enis Pacha, Mutessarif de Moush, dans l'espoir qu'ils écouteraient les conseils du témoin ; il n'en fut rien. Mais certains d'entre les Arméniens lui confirmèrent les faits et gestes de Dumndian et son intention de se porter à une attaque sur Moush. Le témoin leur aurait rappelé les bienfaits du Gouvernement, particulièrement à l'égard des villages de Chenik et Semal qui, autrefois, appartenant aux Kurdes, ont été donnés aux Arméniens pour être colonisés. Il raconte avec les plus grands détails l'enquête faite par lui à Ghelié-guzan au sujet d'un meurtre barbare commis sur la personne d'un Kurde nommé Souli Reno, l'expulsion d'un second Kurde nommé Selim, venu réclamer le "hafir ;" l'assassinat des nommés Mollah Ressoul et Moussa ; le viol de la femme de ce dernier, nommée Hedo, ces deux attentats ayant été, au dire du témoin, la cause principale des luttes survenues entre Kurdes et Arméniens ; ces quatre derniers faits se seraient passés dans le voisinage de Talori.

Les efforts du témoin pour ramener les villageois Arméniens dans la bonne voie étant restés infructueux, il revint auprès de Tahsin Pacha, qui se trouvait alors à Semal.

Invité à différentes reprises par le Président à en venir au récit des événements de 1894, soit de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-guzan, le témoin déclare n'y pas être allé lui-même et ne pouvoir raconter que ce qu'il a entendu. Cette même année, 1894, à la fin d'Avril, Mourad aurait réuni à Ghelié-guzan les gens influents des villages d'alentour, nommé Michaïl, Sako, Erko, Tavo, Agop, et aurait tenu avec eux des conversations dont le témoin ignore la teneur ; les Arméniens au dire des nommés Mirzo, Rechid, et Raho, auraient menacé les Kurdes, s'ils ne changeaient pas de religion, de les tuer, eux et leurs enfants. Mourad, en promettant des secours aux Arméniens qui alléguaient leur petit nombre, aurait donné l'ordre d'écraser deux compagnies de troupes et de les piller. Sur ces entrefaites,

Michaïl et Sako, de Chenik, auraient tué un nommé Silo (Suléiman) et apporté sa tête à Mourad, qui aurait donné cinq Medjidiés de récompense, d'après le récit fait au témoin par le Kurde Rechid et d'autres personnes.

Le témoin confirme, d'après ouï-dire, les attaques des Arméniens, parmi lesquels se trouvaient Michaïl, Ego, Sako, Ergo, Tavo, sur les Kurdes Velikanli. Il commence à raconter le départ des bataillons de Moush pour les montagnes quand le Président, l'interrompant, lui demande de nouveau s'il a été témoin oculaire ; celui-ci, ayant répondu négativement, continue ses déclarations en disant avoir entendu répéter qu'à la suite du combat des Arméniens avec les troupes dans la montagne, cinquante à soixante d'entre eux et de l'autre côté dix à douze soldats auraient été tués. Les Arméniens se seraient alors sauvés, les uns dans la direction de Koulp, les autres dans celle de Sassoon, où ils se seraient cachés dans des maisons Kurdes. Mourad aurait été capturé à Talori.

Il n'a pas entendu dire que les Kurdes se trouvassent avec les soldats, mais au contraire, qu'ils étaient dans un autre endroit.

Les femmes et les enfants Arméniens ayant été amenés sur la crête de la montagne, il n'a pas entendu dire davantage qu'il y en ait eu de tués par les soldats.

Parmi les quinze villages Kurdes bien disposés envers les villageois Arméniens le témoin en nomme cinq : Mouzikan, Couziman, Djahrégian, Kelbastik, Perin. Mais il ne peut spécifier dans lequel les villageois Arméniens auraient caché leurs effets avant de se rendre à la montagne.

Le Président lève la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 7 in No. 293.

Procès-verbal No. 13 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 8, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Le Président fait connaître aux Délégués la réponse de la Commission à la proposition qu'ils ont faite dans la séance de la veille et dont voici la traduction :—

"Pour examiner en toute impartialité et équité l'affaire dont elle a été chargée, la Commission s'acquittera d'une manière juste et complète du devoir d'interroger en votre présence toute personne dont l'audition sera nécessaire. Mais, conformément à la décision précédemment arrêtée, après en avoir délibéré, il est indispensable et naturel de procéder à l'enquête sur les événements au fur et à mesure, et, en vertu de cette décision, de débuter par la recherche des causes, et le mode de rassemblements d'Arméniens armés dans l'Antok Dagh, en commençant d'une part par faire venir et réunir les documents ayant trait aux événements et qui se trouvent dans les Administrations officielles, et d'autre part en faisant comparaître et en écoutant devant la Commission, comme vous pouvez le désirer, les personnes désignées dans ces documents comme en état de fournir des renseignements et des témoignages.

"Ce soin nous a occupé jusqu'à présent de telle façon que de ces personnes il n'en reste plus que quelques-unes à entendre aujourd'hui ou demain. Ensuite, comme nous sont parvenus de Bitlis les documents judiciaires et pièces relatives à l'interrogatoire de Mourad, inspirateur et organisateur de la sédition même, et de ses compagnons envoyés à Bitlis, après avoir été arrêtés les armes à la main sur le lieu des événements, en même temps que ces pièces d'instruction seront lues en présence de la Commission, l'une après l'autre, les rapports émanés des Commandants pendant les opérations militaires. Ensuite nous commencerons à examiner les autres côtés de la question, puis à éclaircir l'une après l'autre, les contradictions qui se sont produites entre les déclarations d'Erko et de Serkis.

"Attendu que c'est un devoir sacré et de nécessité absolue pour la Commission de démêler la vérité en se plaçant à un point de vue impartial tant qu'elle n'aura pas distinguée quels Arméniens s'étaient rassemblés, sur quels points, entre qui a eu lieu le conflit, c'est-à-dire les événements de l'Antok Dagh qui sont les débuts et les fondements de l'affaire, tant qu'elle n'aura pas lu l'interrogatoire des individus arrêtés les armes à la main sur le lieu même des événements, et tant qu'ils n'auront pas été interrogés par la Commission, laisser ce côté de notre travail pour aller dans les villages par-ci par-là, où ont été placés les réfugiés et y procéder à leur interrogatoire serait évidemment à la fois une source de confusion pour l'enquête et un obstacle à la découverte de la vérité

"Pour ces motifs, et conformément à la décision prise antérieurement ci-dessus rappelée, la Commission ne trouve pas nécessaire de se rendre à présent à Hasskeui, comme vous le lui avez proposé. Mais le moment venu, et si elle le juge nécessaire, elle pourrait se transporter aux endroits voulus.

"Quelles que soient les allégations d'excitation ou d'intimidation, du moment où vous en avez parlé, comme il appartient à la Commission, et comme c'est son premier devoir de procéder à l'enquête en toute impartialité, elle est prête à prendre, que ces sortes d'allégations soient fondées ou non, les mesures pour les faire cesser."

Le premier témoin entendu est le nommé Nadir Agha, que son commerce appelait dans les villages et Kavar.

S'y étant rendu dans les derniers jours d'Avril (v. s.) 1894, il en trouva quelques maisons abandonnées; le soir de son arrivée, des Arméniens armés vinrent à lui, et, à ses questions, soit à ses reproches d'une pareille conduite, ils lui répondirent que les gens de Talori, devenus des bandits, les poussaient à la révolte, et qu'eux-mêmes ne pouvaient s'en séparer. Le témoin, de retour à Moush, recommande à son associé de ne plus traiter aucune affaire avec ces villageois. Il raconte ensuite, d'après ouï-dire, dans les mêmes termes que le nommé Taleb Effendi, entendu dans la séance du 7 Février, le meurtre du Kurde Khianli de la tribu des Karikanli, nommé Silo (Suléiman).

Il ajoute qu'Erko, une vingtaine de jours avant son emprisonnement, vint le trouver chez lui avec trois ou cinq personnes, et répondit au témoin, qui le questionna sur la conduite des Arméniens et lui rappelait ses bons conseils, que Dunadian, venu de Moush, et ensuite Mourad, leur avaient troublé l'esprit. Erko dit, en outre, que si ce n'était pas lui, il y aurait eu 100 hommes de tués; à ce moment le Lieutenant Ali Effendi entrait. Erko le désigna en ajoutant: "Cet homme aussi aurait été sous terre. Les habitants de Talori, réunis à ceux de Ghelié-Guzan et atteignant de 300 à 500 individus, voulaient anéantir les compagnies de Merghémourzan campés à une heure et demie de Chenik. Pour ma part," ajoutait Erko, "je disais aux Arméniens, abandonnez le projet de tuer des gens avec qui nous avons eu tant de rapports."

Au dire du témoin, Erko était accompagné des nommés Sako, de Chenik, de Tavo, et du cousin de celui-ci de Semal, et de cinq ou six personnes de Semal également, dont un certain Topal Méhémed, de Moush, présent à cette conversation, connaît les noms; y assistait aussi un certain Abdullah Agha.

Le témoin raconte également d'après ouï-dire l'attaque faite par les Arméniens en Juillet 1894 sur les Kurdes Velikanli, le meurtre barbare d'un Kurde Khianli dont il a été fréquemment question dans les séances précédentes, l'agression par les Arméniens, descendus de l'Antok Dagh, sur un Kurde accompagné de sa femme, laquelle restée seule pendant que son mari s'enfuyait avec leurs compagnons, fut maltraité et ne revint que deux jours après.

Le témoin a entendu dire par les nommés Ressul et Sadok, que les Arméniens avaient mis eux-mêmes le feu à leurs maisons, et les Arméniens Erko, Sako, et Tavo lui auraient déclaré que c'était les Kurdes qui les avaient incendiées.

Le témoin ajoute que d'ailleurs les maisons Arméniennes ne valant que 50 ou 100 piastres, les propriétaires ont l'habitude de les brûler, une fois devenues inhabitables, pour aller les reconstruire plus loin. Les villageois auraient au printemps enfoui dans des fosses leurs tapis et ustensiles de ménage, préparant ainsi leur départ pour l'Antok Dagh, où tous les habitants de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan, Talori, et un petit nombre d'autres villageois atteignaient environ, une fois rassemblés, le chiffre de 3,000.

Il termina en disant que Sako, Tavo, Erko ont été excités par le Kintib Michaïl et l'Évêque Nersès, qui fit, il y a trois ans, une tournée à Chenik et à Semal.

A la connaissance du témoin, il n'y a pas eu, entre Kurdes et Arméniens, de rixes antérieures aux événements de Sassoun.

Sont ensuite entendus, comme ils en avaient exprimé le désir, dans une lettre lue au cours de la séance, les Sieurs Garabet, Isaïe, et Eguiché, Archimandrites des couvents de Tchanli-Kilissé, *alias* Sourp Garabed, et de Sakavi. Ils déclarent leur être commune la déposition que récite le premier et qui n'est au fond qu'un réquisitoire formulé contre l'Évêque Nersès, actuellement détenu à Bitlis, dans les termes suivants:—

1. C'est après l'arrivée de ce dernier à Moush que la nation Arménienne, jusqu'alors tranquille, commença à être troublée; des Muzbatas circulèrent, dont l'un, sans signature mais seulement daté, engageait les Arméniens à changer de religion sans spécifier laquelle ils devaient embrasser, et demandait de l'aide en faveur du peuple opprimé.

2. Dans Arakelos-Vank (Couvent d'Arakel), Kizil-Vank (Couvent Rouge), et Tchanli-Vank (Couvent de Tchanli) furent placés en qualité de professeurs les nommés Raphael, Alexandre, et Bedros, venus du dehors. "Nous ignorons," dit le témoin, "les leçons qu'ils y donnèrent, car les portes nous étaient jour et nuit fermées; nous savons seulement

qu'un soir ils attaquèrent, dans l'Évêché de Moush, à coups de poignard, l'Archimandrite Isaïe et l'auraient tué sans notre arrivée."

3. Le prêtre Agop, du village d'Argonos, se faisait également l'apôtre d'idées séditieuses. Recherché par l'autorité, il vint, déguisé en Cheik, se cacher au Couvent de Tchanli, où Serkevork Mousa le reçut dans la chambre. Quelques jours après, Agop fut tué dans un village voisin.

4. Huit individus, arrivés de Constantinople, vinrent au couvent, soi-disant en pèlerinage. Il y restèrent une nuit, au cours de laquelle ils tinrent de longues conversations, et maltraitèrent un jeune homme de Van, devenu Musulman, et qui les menaça de se plaindre le lendemain à l'autorité. Ils le tuèrent dans la forêt en une heure et quart de distance du couvent. Trois mois après, étant à l'Évêché de Moush, l'Archimandrite Isaïe vit dans les mains du domestique de Nersès les habits ensanglantés qui provenaient du jeune homme assassiné.

5. Nous signalâmes le fait au Patriarcat en lui demandant de déplacer l'Évêque Nersès; mais notre demande ne reçut aucune suite.

6. Damadian et Arabo, accompagnés d'une dizaine d'hommes armés, dont la moitié était Grégorien et l'autre moitié Catholique, vinrent au couvent où ils passèrent la nuit en conférence avec l'Évêque Nersès, se retirant pendant le jour dans la forêt voisine.

Nous télégraphiâmes à ce sujet au Patriarcat sans recevoir de réponse.

Invité par le Président à raconter ce qu'il sait touchant les événements de Sassoon en 1894, le témoin Garabed répond que Dunadian et Arabo se promenaient constamment en compagnie d'hommes armés dans ces villages dont ils excitaient les populations. Chaque année de Diarbekir viennent des Kurdes au nombre de 10,000 tentes environ, et qui causent grand dommage aux Arméniens. Chaque année aussi le Gouvernement envoyait des troupes pour protéger ces derniers. Cette année, c'est-à-dire en 1894, il serait venu 5,000 à 6,000 Kurdes environ. Les rencontres suivies de mort d'hommes, se produisaient entre Kurdes et Arméniens.

Cette même année, Mourad ayant rassemblé des bandes d'hommes armés de Chenik, Semal, Ghélie-Guzan, et Talori, se porta avec eux sur les Kurdes. Des combats eurent lieu; l'affaire prit des proportions de plus en plus grandes; six ou sept bataillons de troupes furent envoyés et le pays fut rempli de soldats. Les Arméniens s'enfuirent devant eux à l'Antok Dagh, et ce qui se passa ensuite le témoin l'ignore. Il sait seulement que les troupes revinrent et maintenant règne la tranquillité la plus complète.

Il termine par un discours dans lequel il remercie le Gouvernement Impérial de la justice et de la bonté dont il n'a jamais cessé d'user à l'égard de la nation Arménienne et qui, le témoin l'espère, lui serait continuée.

Une femme Arménienne ayant eu quelques difficultés de remettre en mains propres au Président de la Commission une Pétition dont elle était porteuse, les Délégués Consulaires, dans le but que de semblables inconvénients soient évités à l'avenir et que le libre accès à la Commission soit autant que possible assuré, demandent que les requêtes puissent être présentées sans entraves, que lecture immédiate en soit donnée en leur présence et qu'elles soient enregistrées au procès-verbal de la séance avec une analyse sommaire de leur contenu.

Le Président donne acte aux Délégués de leur proposition, qui est consignée au procès-verbal de la séance du jour; il ajoute avoir reçu du Mutessarif de Moush l'assurance qu'aucun empêchement n'était apporté à l'arrivée des Arméniens jusqu'à la Commission.

Le Président lève la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRIVALSKY.

Inclosure 8 in No. 293.

Procès-verbal No. 14 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 9, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Le Président donne lecture partielle de quelques-uns des interrogatoires d'Arméniens détenus à Bitlis et dont les noms suivent. Ils sont au nombre de vingt-cinq à trente: Mourad ou Hampargoun Boyadjian, des villages de Talori; Kemo, Tono, Kemo (2), Khatcho, Gaspard, Sado, Khatcho (2), Kiragos, Tonik, Ergo, Khatcho (3), Kili, Abo, Avo, Boghos Sino, Kivo Zeko; du village de Halamak, Tono; du village de Migrogom, Ohannes;

du village de Aktché, Sinikerem; du village de Artik, Kevork; du village de Kop, Kingos; du village de Kefravan, Attam; du village de Hetink, Migrditch.

Ces individus comparaîtront en personne devant la Commission.

De la lecture de l'interrogatoire de Mourad, qui offre seul quelque intérêt, il résulterait que son vrai nom est Hamparsoum Boyadjian, originaire du Vilayet d'Adana, ayant pris, pour n'être pas reconnu, le nom de Mourad et les habits d'un Cheik, et qu'il serait venu par Alep et Diarbekir. Son intention était, dit-il, de changer les habitudes de ses frères Arméniens qui vendaient leurs enfants comme du bétail. Il est allé à Athènes et a écrit dans le journal "Hintchak;" il y a vu Damadian qu'il rencontra à Constantinople lors des événements de Coum-Capou. Il ne se rappelle pas le nom des gens qui lui donnait l'hospitalité dans les villages de Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-Guzan; c'est à la suite de représailles exercés par les villageois de Semal contre les Kurdes Bekiranli, qui avaient tué un des leurs, que l'affaire prit de grandes proportions. Mourad ajoute qu'il ne connaissait personne à Boulanik, Van, et Diarbekir qui voulût exciter la population; lui-même venait dans un but d'apaisement; s'il a agi contre la loi, il est prêt à souffrir.

Le premier témoin introduit, nommé Sidik Agha, s'est rendu, en service officiel, pour la question des dîmes, entre le 10 et 12 Juillet (v. s.), 1894, dans le district de Sassoon, au village de Kiagashin (Keghashin), où se trouvait alors le Caïmmeam. Chemin faisant, il vit que les habitants de Chenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan, et Talori avec leurs familles se trouvaient sur l'Antok Dagh, où ils s'étaient retirés depuis trois ou quatre jours; dans les champs ne restaient pour y travailler que des vieillards. Les routes de Koulp et Khian étaient coupées, barrées, et gardées par des hommes en armes, comme des sentinelles, derrière des parapets.

A Kingashin, le frère du Kurde Karikanli, Suleiman, lui raconta que ce dernier avait été tué par les Arméniens, qui lui avaient coupé la tête, pendant qui lui-même s'enfuyait.

Au témoin leur demandant les raisons d'une pareille conduite, les gens répondirent que le bruit courait que Damadian, puis Mourad, poussaient les populations Arméniennes à fonder un Royaume d'Arménie.

Le témoin répète l'histoire précédemment entendue des villageois ayant caché dans de fosses leurs effets, ustensiles de ménage, &c., avec l'intention de s'enfuir ensuite à l'Antok Dagh. A son retour de Sassoon, il apprit de zaptiés que les Arméniens avaient attaqué les Kurdes Velikanli; ses tentes se trouvant parmi les leurs, il se rendit à son pâturage, situé à une heure de distance des Kurdes. Ses tentes n'avaient pas souffert; les Kurdes lui racontèrent cette attaque dans les mêmes termes que ceux des récits antérieurement.

Le témoin se rendit de nouveau à Kiagashin, d'où le Caïmmeam, apprenant que les Arméniens voulaient l'y attaquer, s'enfuyait à Tapik, village composé mi-partie de Chrétiens, mi-partie de Musulmans. "Jusqu'ici," lui aurait dit ce fonctionnaire, "l'affaire était restée secrète: elle est maintenant sortie au grand jour."

Revenu au pâturage, le témoin entendant des coups de fusil, aperçut de l'élévation où il se trouvait qu'à cinq minutes de distance de Semal, sur la route de Moush, une rencontre avait lieu entre Arméniens et Kurdes; les combattants de Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-Guzan étaient en nombre égal, chacun des deux partis 300 environ. Les Arméniens descendaient de l'Antok Dagh, où les Kurdes vinrent à leur rencontre. Le combat, qui dura deux heures, et au cours duquel deux Bekiranlis et un Arménien furent tués—le témoin ne connaît pas le nombre des blessés—eut lieu au mois d'Août, dix jours au moins après les rixes entre les Arméniens et les Kurdes Velikanli; l'autorité envoya un agent sur le lieu de combat.

Postérieurement aux événements de Sassoon, Erko, de Chenik, fils de Guéni, *alias* Kourki, vint dans la tente du témoin lui demander des provisions pour sa famille. Questionné sur l'origine de sa blessure au visage, il raconta que, lors de sa fuite d'Antok Dagh vers Koulp, au cours d'une rencontre avec les Kurdes, il avait été blessé. A cette conversation étaient présents Agha Tchouch et Ali Agha, fils d'Ahmet Agha.

Au mois de Janvier, le nommé Avedis Agha a dit au témoin que des agissements comme ceux des Arméniens dans la montagne ne pouvaient pas être dissimulé. Comment pouvait-on nier que le but en était le brigandage?

Le témoin n'a pas entendu dire que les Arméniens se plaignissent des Kurdes en général; ils viennent aux pâturages au nombre de 200 à 300 tentes. Les Badikanli étaient au delà de Merguémouzan dans la direction de Guendj.

Le deuxième témoin introduit est Bedros Effendi, Moudir de la Dette Publique à Moush, qui n'a rien vu par lui-même et qui reproduit le récit à lui fait, dans les derniers jours de Juillet (v. s.) 1894, au village de Pertak, par un nommé Ohan, de Ghelié-Guzan, venu pour mendier. Ohan explique son état de misère, en disant s'être opposé aux mauvais desseins de Damadian, qui excitait les populations à se rendre indépendantes, et qui deux ans plus tard était arrêté. Mourad avec un nommé Armenak, de Kizil-Agatch, continuait une

propagande devenue de plus en plus active. En 1894, enfin, tous deux proclamaient le temps d'agir venu. Les habitants de la plaine de Moush, de Van, de Boulanik, de Varto, disaient-ils, n'attendent pour se soulever que la descente des montagnes des habitants de Kavar et de Talori. Mais avant d'engager l'action, Mourad conseilla à ces derniers d'envoyer leurs familles et leurs biens dans les villages amis de Sassoon et de Khian. Les villageois de Chenik et de Semal avait déjà en partie commencé à suivre ce conseil quand, sur la route, ils se rencontrèrent avec les Kurdes Bekiranli, au nombre de trente à quarante tentes, qui, par peur des habitants de Talori, se rendirent cette année à leurs pâturages par la route de Koulp et les deux villages précités. Une rixe se produit; un Kurde est tué; le combat se prolongeant, trois Arméniens et neuf Kurdes y trouvent la mort. Les Kurdes qui venaient ensuite, en nombre à peu près égal aux premiers, se portèrent aux secours de leurs frères attaqués. Les Arméniens, ne recevant pas les renforts qu'ils avaient envoyé chercher à Talori, se préparent, néanmoins, à continuer la lutte, quand les autorités, informés, envoient deux compagnies de troupes sur le lieu des événements. Les Arméniens sont obligés de se retirer; les Kurdes s'emparent de leurs villages, qu'ils livrent aux flammes. Mourad, en s'enfuyant dans les montagnes avec les habitants de Talori, aurait mis lui-même le feu à plusieurs maisons.

Le témoin Bedros complète ce récit en ajoutant qu'à son avis Mourad et Damadian seuls n'auraient pas eu une influence suffisante sur l'esprit des populations si en même temps qu'eux l'Évêque Nersès, dans la maison duquel se tenaient des conférences secrètes, ne leur avait pas adressé des Proclamations que le témoin a traduites lui-même. Il termine en disant que les femmes de Sassoon venaient chercher en ville du plomb, qu'elles portaient ensuite à la montagne; même après les événements, un mulet chargé de poudre fut saisi dans la plaine de Moush.

Le Président lève la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 9 in No. 293.

Procès-verbal No. 15 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 11, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Il résulte de la déposition du nommé Mustapha Agha, premier témoin entendu, qu'ayant affermé en 1894 les dîmes de Chenik et Semal et s'y étant rendu vers le 17 ou 18 Juillet (v.s.), pour en examiner les récoltes, il trouva ces deux villages évacués par les habitants, les maisons presque toutes brûlées. Des vieilles femmes qui ramassaient des épis de blé dans les champs, répondirent à ses questions que les villageois étaient partis dans la montagne, et que cette année ils ne paieraient pas la dîme. Pendant cette conversation, ayant aperçu des Arméniens armés qui sortaient des fourrées, il prit peur et revint directement à Moush, où il porta plainte à l'autorité.

Le deuxième témoin, Nasrullah Agha, affermeur des dîmes de Ghelié-Guzan, déclare y être allé au mois de Juillet, sans pouvoir préciser la date. Il refait le même récit que le témoin précédent, en l'appliquant au village de Ghelié-Guzan, avec cette différence, que les maisons n'en étaient pas brûlées.

A la suite de leur réclamation à tous deux, l'autorité envoya dans les villages qui les intéresseraient respectivement les deux témoins, qui sont ensuite entendus: Khalil Effendi, membre du Conseil Administratif de Moush, et Beder Khan Effendi, Secrétaire du Bureau des Impôts ("Virgo Kiatib").

De la déposition du premier il ressort que parti avec Beder Khan de Moush le 13 Août (v. s.), 1894, ils arrivèrent le lendemain à Semal, qu'ils trouvèrent incendié: les habitants dans la montagne. En allant à Chenik et sur la montagne qui le domine, ayant aperçu une vingtaine d'Arméniens armés, ils n'entrèrent pas dans le village, et se rendirent à Kiagashin pour y passer la nuit. Le lendemain matin ils apprirent l'arrivée de troupes de Moush, et retournèrent à Chenik et à Semal pour examiner l'état des champs. Ceux qui bordaient la route étaient abîmés par les passants: ceux attenant aux villages avaient été récoltés par les paysans.

En rejoignant les troupes parties pour Ghelié-Guzan, ils entendirent des coups de fusil; les soldats leur dirent que c'était les Arméniens qui avaient tiré sur eux et s'étaient sauvés.

Les deux témoins couchèrent à Ghelié-Guzan et revinrent ensuite à Moush. Comme conséquence des rapports remis par eux au Conseil Administratif le Lieutenant de zaptiés, Husséin Effendi, fut envoyé pour surveiller les champs restés intacts des trois villages en question.

Il s'acquitta de ce soin jusqu'à l'arrivée du Muchir Pacha, sur l'ordre duquel le Mutessarif de Moush, Djelal Pacha, qu'accompagnait le témoin Khalil Effendi, remit leurs récoltes aux Arméniens. C'est à cette époque que Mourad fut arrêté.

La troisième fois que le témoin se rendit au mois de Septembre dernier dans ces parages, il vit à Semal des fosses où les villageois avaient au printemps caché leurs tapis, ustensiles de ménage, &c., et dont ils se plaignaient d'avoir été volés par les Kurdes. Ceux-ci niaient et affirmaient que c'était les Arméniens eux-mêmes qui les avaient emportés.

Le témoin Beder Khan confirme en ce qui le concerne la déposition précédente. Il ajoute que les récoltes de Ghelié-Guzan n'avaient pas été endommagées, qu'à Semal, dont les maisons étaient incendiées, et à Chenik, les deux compagnies de soldats que tous deux y avaient vues vers le 15 Août (v. s.) avaient été rejointes par un bataillon, et qu'ainsi complétées, elles avaient atteint Ghelié-Guzan; que ces trois villages avaient été totalement désertés avant leur arrivée à lui et à Kalil Effendi, par crainte des Arméniens, qui se promenaient armés aux alentours, ils n'étaient pas entrés à Ghelié-Guzan même, qui se compose de quatre quartiers séparés l'un de l'autre, à une heure de distance environ; mais ils avaient vu la maison du nommé Bedo brûlée, auprès de laquelle les troupes étaient campées. L'incendie paraissait de date ancienne.

Le Président lève la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 10 in No. 293.

Procès-verbal No. 16 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 12, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires.

Les Délégués ayant renouvelé leur proposition de se rendre à Hasskeui, village voisin de Moush, où se trouvent de nombreux réfugiés de Chenik, la Commission se déclare prête à s'y transporter; mais en apprenant d'elle l'arrivée à Moush d'une dizaine d'habitants des villages de Kavar et parmi lesquels il y a pouvant être entendus immédiatement des Arméniens, cités par le nommé Erko, comme ayant été mêlés directement aux événements, les Délégués pensent préférable, pour la bonne direction de l'enquête et en faisant observer que le principal intérêt de leur proposition première consistait dans la rapidité avec laquelle elle aurait pu être mise à exécution, de ne rien objecter à l'audition des dits témoins, non sans réserver la question de transport ultérieur de la Commission dans le village ci-dessus désigné.

Conformément à la demande faite par les Délégués Consulaires dans la séance du 6 Février, le Président adjoint en qualité de Drogman à Tatéos Effendi, le Sieur Mighrditch Effendi, Arménien Catholique, membre du Tribunal de Première Instance de Moush; les Délégués ayant fait observer que la plupart des témoins devant être entendus appartiennent au rite Arménien-Grégorien, il y aurait intérêt à ce que le deuxième Drogman fût aussi un de leurs coreligionnaires inspirant toute confiance, le Commissaire de Police, sur l'ordre du Président de trouver quelqu'un, amène un écrivain public. Les Délégués faisant remarquer qu'il ne présente pas les qualités nécessaires, l'opposent à son admission et il est remplacé par Mardiros Agha, membre du Conseil Administratif Arménien.

Le témoin entendu déclare se nommer Khatcho, fils de Manook, âgé de 30 ans, de Chenik, actuellement hospitalisé au village de Kurd-Median, sis à trois heures dans la plaine de Moush, être venu la veille en ville pour y chercher du pain et rencontré dans la rue par un zaptié qui lui a dit: "La Commission te demande," y avait été envoyé par lui.

D'après sa déposition, à la suite des rixes ayant duré deux jours au mois de Juillet 1894 entre les Kurdes Badikanli et Bekiranli et les Arméniens de Chenik et Semal, ces derniers ne pouvant résister plus longtemps, s'enfuirent dans l'Antok Dagh. Ils y furent rejoints deux jours après par les villageois de Ghelié-Guzan, se sauvant à leur tour devant les mêmes agresseurs. Les gens des deux premiers villages avaient envoyé à la montagne leurs familles et leurs bestiaux quatre ou cinq jours avant de s'y rendre eux-mêmes; ceux du troisième village un jour avant leur départ.

Le témoin, qui était resté à Chenik pour surveiller ses champs, ne rejoignit sa famille et les habitants de son village que trois jours plus tard, effrayé par les Kurdes.

Dans les rixes ci-dessus rappelées, le Kurdes perdirent deux hommes et les Arméniens eurent deux hommes et une femme tués. Le témoin attribue les motifs de ces combats aux excitations de Mourad, engageant les Arméniens à se soulever, et leur disant: "Versez un peu de sang; le pays est à nous. Le secours nous viendra. Nous ferons une Arménie."

Sur l'Antok Dagh, les villageois de Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-Guzan étaient seuls; ils y restèrent de vingt à vingt-quatre jours; 200 d'entre eux environ étaient armés. Les Kurdes Badikanli et Bekiranli atteignent de 800 à 1,000; ils avaient amené leurs bestiaux qu'ils poissaient sur les champs des villages Arméniens.

Pendant leur séjour à l'Antok Dagh les Arméniens se promenaient armés sur les flancs de la montagne, dans les bois, prêts à repousser l'attaque des Kurdes.

C'est à la fin du séjour des villageois que leurs maisons, dont le témoin aperçut la fumée, furent brûlées; les Kurdes et les soldats se trouvaient là.

Le témoin déclare successivement qu'il ignore qui a mis le feu, des Kurdes ou des soldats, puisque ce sont les Kurdes, les soldats étant arrivés pendant l'incendie.

Entourés de tous côtés, manquant de nourriture, et leurs récoltes ayant été prises par les Kurdes, les Arméniens se virent obligés de fuir de l'Antok Dagh; ils n'y avaient été attaqués par personne, ni par les soldats, ni par les Kurdes, pendant qu'ils y séjournèrent. Ils ne furent pas davantage poursuivis, lors de leur fuite dans des directions différentes; ils apprirent seulement que des troupes étaient venues à Ghelié-Guzan et que des troupes se rendirent à Talori.

Les villageois de Chenik, avec femmes et enfants, se sauvèrent dans la direction de Koulp; de là, ils s'éparpillèrent dans des directions différentes.

Le témoin affirme que jusque là il n'y avait eu personne de tué; mais ce qui se passa ensuite il l'ignore, s'étant lui-même rendu avec son frère vers le village de Kizil Aghatch sur la route duquel tous deux furent assaillis et dépouillés de leurs vêtements par des bergers Khochekanli.

Le témoin a entendu dire que Mourad se trouvait dans la montagne du côté de Talori, qu'un homme de Ghelié-Guzan était allé le trouver.

Les gens de Talori venaient secrètement à Chenik, mais il ignore leurs noms. Interrogé sur la personne qui pourrait fournir ce renseignement, il désigne le nommé Kirko; où se trouve-t-il actuellement? Il a été tué après que les fuyards se furent séparés à Koulp.

Le témoin est marié; père de quatre enfants; toute sa famille est vivante.

La Commission décide d'entendre au fur et à mesure les villageois Arméniens dont il a été question au début de la séance, qui ont remis une requête et dont les noms suivent:—

Sako, de Chenik; Artin, de Chenik; Serko, de Ghelié-Guzan; Kiragos, de Ghelié-Guzan; Tavo, de Semal; Simo, de Semal; Egho, de Semal.

Le Président lève la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

Inclosure 11 in No. 293.

Procès-verbal No. 17 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of February 13, 1895.

TOUS les membres de la Commission sont présents, ainsi que les Délégués Consulaires:

Le témoin entendu est le nommé Sako, fils de Kourki, de Chenik, âgé de 60 ans environ, marié. Il raconte s'être enfui à la fin de Juillet (v. s.) 1894, avec les autres habitants de Chenik, sur l'Antok Dagh, à la suite de l'attaque de son village par les troupes de Merguémouzan, réunies aux Kurdes Bekiranli, parmi lesquels étaient 300 cavaliers. Ils furent poursuivis de Chenik jusqu'à Semal. Ce second village ayant été également attaqué, les habitants se sauvèrent avec eux vers Ghelié-Guzan, où tous passèrent la journée au lendemain hors du village. Le troisième jour, Ghelié-Guzan étant attaqué à son tour, les habitants des trois villages réunis prirent la fuite vers l'Antok Dagh.

Le témoin ignore la cause de l'attaque, à tel point que le matin même du jour où elle a eu lieu, les villageois de Chenik avaient fourni les rations habituelles aux troupes de Merguémouzan. Il affirma que cette année, à l'encontre de l'année précédente, aucune rixe ne s'était produite entre eux et les Kurdes.

Pendant la fuite vers l'Antok Dagh, furent tués cinq Arméniens de Semal et cinq de Chénik, dont une femme. Voici les noms de ces derniers :—

1. Djouvé, fils de Khasso, de Chenik.
2. Tono, fils de Migro, de Chenik.
3. Le fils de Tono.
4. Ossép, fils de Kashish.
5. Djouré, femme de Gourdjo.

Les villageois de Chenik réussirent à envoyer devant eux leurs femmes et leurs enfants avec les troupeaux et quelques effets transportables ; ne furent laissés au village que des vieilles femmes, des petits enfants au berceau abandonnés par leurs mères au moment de la panique et parmi lesquels se trouvait la propre fille du témoin nommée Chouchan, âgée de quarante jours ; il ne sait rien pour les autres si ce n'est que ses parents Apré et Tono lui ont raconté la même chose pour leurs propres enfants.

Quelques petits enfants étaient aussi laissés sous les pierres par leurs mères en fuite.

Au fur et à mesure que les villages de Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-Guzan étaient envahis, ils étaient mis au pillage et brûlés par les soldats. Le témoin déclare l'avoir vu de ses propres yeux. Toutes les maisons de Chenik furent incendiées par eux ; et quand, les événements terminés, les villageois y revinrent, quelques-unes furent rebâties par les autorités.

Sur l'Antok Dagh les habitants des seuls villages de Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-Guzan, au nombre de 2,000 environ, restèrent pendant cinq jours avec leurs familles et leurs troupeaux. Ceux-ci trouvaient à paître, mais eux-mêmes restaient affamés. Pendant qu'ils y séjournèrent, aucune rixe ne se produisit avec les Kurdes et les soldats, les villageois ayant laissé dans les champs au moment de leur fuite les armes qu'ils pouvaient avoir ; n'en portaient parmi eux, et comme à leur habitude, que les bergers qui les accompagnaient dans la montagne où ils promenaient les troupeaux. Le nombre de ces bergers, soit à Chenik, soit à Semal, atteindrait cinquante par village, et 100 environ à Ghelié-Guzan, plus important. A Chenik, chaque maison en compte à peu près deux ; et s'ils sont plus nombreux que dans la plaine, c'est que la nature des pâturages dans la montagne l'exige.

Interrogé par le Président sur les combats que le témoin Erko déclare avoir eu lieu pendant vingt jours entre les Arméniens, les Kurdes, et les soldats, le témoin Sako répond ignorer ce qu'a pu dire Erko ; mais en ce qui le regarde personnellement, il ne s'est pas battu lui-même, et n'a pas vu d'autres se battre. Entourés comme ils l'étaient de quatre côtés par les soldats et les Kurdes, comment les Arméniens auraient-ils pu informer l'autorité de ce qui se passait ?

Au bout de cinq jours, les Kurdes et les troupes en grand nombre montèrent sur l'Antok Dagh à l'attaque des Arméniens, dont ils tuèrent les uns pendant que les autres se sauvaient ; les soldats poursuivaient les fuyards en les tuant à coups de baïonnette. Le témoin a vu lui-même un soldat tuer ainsi un enfant, et il a entendu raconter que des mères, craignant d'être trahies dans leur fuite, mettaient la main sur la bouche de leurs enfants pour arrêter leurs cris. Plusieurs moururent étouffés de la sorte.

Les Arméniens se sauvèrent dans des directions différentes. Le témoin, en compagnie de ses deux neveux, Erko et Mardo, tous deux fils de Kalo, et Khatcho, fils de ce même Mardo, s'enfui avec femmes et enfants vers Koulp, en laissant dans la montagne le petit enfant de Mardo, nommé Guiro, âgé d'un an, et la petite fille d'Erko, nommée Manouchak, âgée de 2 ans.

Au moment de l'attaque sur l'Antok Dagh, les bergers, qui étaient tous armés, étaient dispersés avec leurs troupeaux à de grandes distances. Parmi ceux de Chenik, cinq furent tués : Kazar, Migro, Mardiros, Mardo, Artin.

D'après le témoin, soit pendant cette attaque, soit pendant la fuite qui en était la conséquence, il n'y eut aucune résistance de la part des Arméniens. Une partie d'entre eux, au nombre total de 200, y compris femmes et enfants, avec le prêtre Ohannes, de Semal, se dirigent par la route de Sassoon au campement des soldats à Ghélié-Guzan, pour se rendre à eux ; là les femmes et les enfants furent séparés des hommes, et ces derniers tués à coups de baïonnette ; parmi eux se trouvait le neveu du témoin, un nommé Ohannes, autre que le prêtre de Semal ; il était marié et père de famille. Ces soldats n'étaient pas ceux en détachement à Merghémouzan, mais étaient commandés par un officier supérieur, dont le témoin ignore le grade, et qui était comme un Alai Bey (Colonel). Le témoin a entendu le récit de ces faits de la bouche de femmes qui y assistaient, mais les nommés Tavo, de Semal, et Serko, de Ghelié-guzan peuvent montrer les places où furent enfouis les cadavres.

A une question du Président, qui lui dit avoir connaissance d'un combat qui aurait eu

lieu à Ghelié-guzan, et où des soldats ont été tués, le témoin affirma de nouveau que les Arméniens sont allés au camp pour se rendre.

Pendant qu'il se sauvait vers Koulp, les autres villageois, fuyant de l'Antok Dagh, se dirigeaient, qui dans la plaine de Moush, qui vers Sassoon, où, cachés dans les rochers et les bois, ils purent se nourrir, grâce à la proximité de villages voisins.

Une fois le Muchir, Zekki Pacha, arrivé, les Arméniens regagnèrent leurs propres villages, où ils ne trouvèrent plus ni leurs maisons, ni leurs biens, ni leurs récoltes dans les champs.

Interrogé au sujet d'actes de brigandage ou de meurtre commis au printemps et pendant l'été de 1894 par les Arméniens sur les Kurdes, le témoin nie absolument en avoir connaissance, et qualifie ces accusations de calomnies ; il n'a entendu parler de faits semblables pour la première fois que par un zaptié venu à Chenik pour y chercher du beurre destiné au ravitaillement des troupes, et qui lui raconta que le cadavre mutilé d'un Kurde avait été apporté au campement de Merguémouzan.

Sur une seconde question du Président, le témoin dit que le Kol-Agassi Moustapha Effendi et le Lieutenant Ali Effendi venaient en effet à Chenik ; mais il nie avoir été interrogé par le premier de ces officiers au sujet de ce meurtre, ou en avoir reçu des conseils en compagnie d'Erko et de Kirko ; il ajoute qu'il y a à Chenik un autre Sako que lui.

A l'occasion des rixes survenues à la fin de Juillet (v. s.) 1894 entre les Kurdes Velikanli et les Arméniens, le témoin les attribue à un vol de moutons commis au préjudice d'Arko, les bergers étant allé les reprendre, et ayant en même temps emmené des bestiaux appartenant aux Kurdes, une lutte s'ensuivit ; postérieurement, ce dernier bétail fut restitué par les villageois au Yuzbachi Iskender Agha.

Le témoin ignore si, pendant cette rencontre, des Kurdes auraient été tués ; il ne sait pas davantage si, comme Chenik, Semal, et Ghelié-guzan, d'autres villages ont été attaqués par les soldats et les Kurdes.

Le Président lève la séance.

(Signé) H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. VILBERT.
M. PRJVALSKY.

No. 294.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 188.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March 21, 1895.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 126 of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo on the subject of Armenian prisoners at Kozat. I have caused a strong representation of the whole case to be made to the Grand Vizier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 294.

Consul Barnham to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Aleppo, March 5, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency, with reference to my despatch of the 10th ultimo, and to my telegram of this date, that reports have been received at Aleppo of the deaths of several of the Armenians who were imprisoned at Kozat under the circumstances reported by me. In some cases the news was received by telegraph, in others by messenger, and only in one instance by letter, no doubt because there is always great risk of letters being stopped in transmission.

The details of the sad story have therefore been given verbally and after a certain lapse of time, and may on that account be inexact ; yet the main fact would seem to be beyond question that many of those who left Aleppo two months ago, for the most part young and in good health, have perished suddenly and unaccountably.

Hagob Kilyan, a resident of Aleppo, died in prison at Kozat.

Hohannes Tarikian, of Aleppo, died at Kharput, immediately after his release from

Kozat prison. These two were natives of a village in the Dersim, called, in Armenian, Madioun, in Turkish, Gemljilar.

Sarkis Papazian, watchmaker of Aleppo, native of the village of Mamoosa, in the Dersim, died in Kozat prison.

So also did Boghos Topjian, of Aleppo, native of the village of Garmiri; while Muggerditch Topjian, presumably his brother, has become blind, and is still in prison.

Harontiun Cholakjian, of the village of Iritserack, died in prison.

Stepan Karadjian, a young man of 24, left Kozat prison in a state of paralysis. I had previously reported the deaths of Stepan and David Tavidian.

The story of Cholakjian is curious and painful. It is said that he was employed by the Mutessarif of Kozat to manufacture rockets for the celebration of the Sultan's birthday; that after he had made a large number, the Mutessarif told him to take home the remainder of the powder, continue the work there, and bring the fireworks to him when ready. The man left for his home, but was met and arrested by zaptiehs, who found the powder in his pockets, and brought him before the Mutessarif, who denied having given the powder, and ordered him to be thrown into prison. Cholakjian was a resident of the Dersim, but had relatives among the prisoners from Aleppo.

Twelve remain in prison, and are ill. It is said that the victims are covered with ulcers from head to foot, but it is also alleged that prisoners who are confined at Kozat for other causes are in good health. This, if true, would suggest foul play.

It would, I fear, be difficult to ascertain the truth of this matter. Kozat is away in the Dersim Mountains, difficult of access, and rarely visited by Europeans.

The district is, I understand, within the Vilayet of Kharput, not an independent vilayet as formerly.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 295.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 109.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 26, 1895, noon.*

MR. BOYAJIAN telegraphed from Diarbekir on the 23rd instant as follows:—

"I have received private information from a respectable Mahommedan that relations seem greatly strained between the Christians and the Turks."

On the receipt of this communication I telegraphed for details, and received the following reply:—

"The statements of my telegrams of yesterday are confirmed by what I see daily and hear of as occurring here and in the districts of Silivan and Palu, by the panic and ill-treatment of Christians by the police and other authorities, and by the insolence of the Mahommedans.

"The French Consul here shares my view.

"It is most necessary that the Commissioner of Police should be dismissed at once, the Sheikh removed, and that the Porte should send the strictest orders to the Acting Governor-General to remind him of his duty, and of the serious responsibility which he will incur should any breach of the public peace take place."

No. 296.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 110.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 26, 1895, noon.*

MY telegram No. 109 of to-day.

I instructed Mr. Block to make a representation at the Porte on the receipt of the telegrams from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, and the measures recommended by Mr. Boyajian were strongly pressed by him, as well as by the French and Russian Dragomans.

They also urged the punishment of the Turk who had committed an assault at Diarbekir on a servant of the French convent at that place.

No. 297.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 111.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 26, 1895, 7·30 P.M.*

WITH reference to my immediately preceding telegram, I have been informed by the Porte that the Acting Governor-General of Diarbekir has been instructed to send Sheikh of Zeilan before the Commission at Moush, unless he had already started for Mecca, and that he has been ordered at the same time, in consequence of our joint representation yesterday, to adopt such measures as are necessary for the maintenance of order.

No. 298.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir F. Lascelles.

(No. 85.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 26, 1895.*

IN your Excellency's telegram No. 10 of the 2nd ultimo, you reported that the Russian Government were not aware of any refugees from the Sassoon district having crossed into Russian territory, but that, in the event of any such refugees being found, no objection to their examination was anticipated.

I request your Excellency to inform Prince Lobanoff, in case the Russian Government should be disposed to make further inquiry into the matter, that Her Majesty's Consular officers in North-west Persia have heard that some Armenians from the disturbed districts of Asia Minor have taken refuge at Erivan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 299.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 27.)

(No. 112.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 27, 1895, 2 P.M.*

THE British Consul at Trebizond telegraphs the following:—

"Dr. Jewett reports that on the 19th instant a quarrel arose at Tokat between Armenians and Turks, and that from ten to fifteen were killed on each side.

"A carpet was the cause of the quarrel."

No. 300.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 28.)

(No. 113.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 28, 1895, 11·45 A.M.*

HER Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum has sent the following telegram in reply to the inquiries which I made on receipt of your Lordship's telegram No. 29 of the 22nd March:—

"Like all similar documents, copies of the inclosure in my despatch No. 53 were communicated to my colleagues and sent to Mr. Shipley.

"In reply to the latter's inquiry as to the whereabouts of Mevloud, I have informed him that he is here, but that he would certainly deny before the Commission the statement he had previously made.

"Mevloud has not been sent to Erzingian, and the authorities are not aware of his statement."

No. 301.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 28.)

(No. 114.)
(Telegraphic.) P *Constantinople, March 28, 1895, noon.*

WITH reference to my immediately preceding telegram, I have the honour to report that Mr. Shipley has telegraphed to-day as follows:—

"The Commission has requested us to supply it with a list of those persons whose evidence we consider necessary, and we have done so, with a reservation that it must not be looked upon as a complete one.

"The Commission has accordingly deferred its departure.

"In regard to Mevloud, we think it doubtful whether, under Moush surroundings, he would dare to say what he knows, and we hesitate to call him. We learn that Khazan does not wish to appear unless absolutely required, and suggests that his appearance might also be deferred.

The names of two witnesses from Shenik have been submitted by us to the Commission, one of them a woman, whose depositions have been furnished to us from Erzeroum. Her evidence will be most valuable if repeated.

"I have telegraphed the above to Mr. Graves."

No. 302.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 28.)

(No. 32.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburgh, March 28, 1895.*

IN conversation with Prince Lobanoff yesterday, I read to his Excellency the inclosures in your Lordship's despatches Nos. 79 and 80, consisting of Sir P. Currie's telegrams Nos. 98, 99, and 102.

While thanking me, his Excellency said that he was awaiting a report from Constantinople as to M. Nélidoff's consultation on the subject of Armenian reforms with his colleagues.

In this conversation the difficulty—or rather impossibility—of delimitating Armenia was dwelt on at length by Prince Lobanoff.

I will forward a despatch by to-day's messenger.

No. 303.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 131 A.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 28, 1895.*

RUSTEM PASHA called upon me yesterday for the first time after his long illness, and spoke at some length concerning the Armenian question. He repeated to me what he had so often said before, that the difficulties respecting the Armenians were entirely caused by the action of revolutionary agents and Societies in this country by which they were encouraged.

I said that I could only repeat to his Excellency my opinion that, although there undoubtedly were some revolutionary agents at work, the causes were far more deep-seated, and arose from the maladministration in Turkey itself.

His Excellency spoke with much bitterness of what he considered were the exaggerated and unfounded statements of the atrocities alleged to have been committed by the Turkish soldiers in the Sassoon district.

I said that, without committing myself to a belief in the various statements which had appeared in the public press, I felt bound to tell him that information which had reached me, the authenticity of which I could not doubt, showed that there was only too much foundation for the belief that terrible atrocities had been perpetrated, and it was perfectly clear that it would be necessary when the inquiry was concluded that effective remedial measures should be introduced, and that security should be taken for the better administration of the country in future.

Rustem Pasha asked me upon what grounds we based our right to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey.

I expressed some astonishment at this inquiry, as I said I thought he must be aware that, as regards the Armenians, we had the most plain and undoubted right, based upon the Treaty of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention of 1878, and not only had we, in common with the other Powers, a right to interfere, but those Treaties laid upon us most serious obligations that we could not neglect.

I could not, I said, disguise from him that the state of affairs in Asia Minor was becoming more and more unsatisfactory. Reports reached us from our Consuls that increasing bitterness of feeling showed itself between the Christian and Mussulman populations; and I feared that, if this continued, it might give rise to serious events. Sir P. Currie had recently, under my instructions, brought before the Sultan the continued numerous arrests of Armenians in all parts of the country, their detention for long periods without trial, and, I regretted to say, in some cases, the cruel treatment to which they had been subjected in the prisons.

His Majesty had expressed his surprise at these statements, and, I was glad to say, had promised immediate inquiry into the grievances of the Armenians and the means of remedy.

I said I had also received with much satisfaction the announcement that the Armenian ecclesiastical prisoners, with the exception of those who had been guilty of murder or other grave offences, would be released, and I trusted that this indicated that the Sultan was becoming alive to the dangerous state of affairs.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 304.

Brief Epitome of Statement received from a Correspondent at Mosul respecting Asia Minor.—(Communicated by Evangelical Alliance, March 29, 1895.)

Partial List of Exactions made upon the Village of Monsoria (Kaimakamlik of Jeziret) by the Government and by Mustapha Pasha, Kocher, in 1893.

GOVERNMENT exactions: 4,000 piastres were paid for back taxes, leaving 2,000 piastres to be paid, but Government claimed 5,000 piastres more, and refused to produce an account. For several years a double tax, amounting to about 4,000 piastres, was demanded from fourteen people. Mustapha Pasha bought the tithes from Government for 7,500 piastres, and then collected 9,000 piastres. On complaint being made to the Government they did nothing, but Mustapha sent droves of sheep to devour the remaining crops, valued at 2,000 piastres. The village is required to pay 14,000 piastres yearly, but in 1893 the excess on these legitimate taxes amounted to 12,500 piastres.

The exactions by the Agha family of Shernak (which is one day north of Jesiret) from the village of Hassan amounted to more than 10,973 piastres in value—cash (the larger part), use of workmen, building materials, &c. The oppression is increasing, as the exactions for the years 1880-82 were 5,376 piastres in value.

A Christian of the Berwer district, who was an eye-witness of the oppressions practised by the Kurds, gives examples of recent occurrences. He mentioned the names of eight murdered men, and spoke of others. There was continual robbery of money, and daily raids upon these villages for food and clothing. The building materials for houses, which contained altogether eighty-six rooms, were carried by the Christians on their backs, receiving no recompense of any sort. The Christians for generations have also done all the farm work for these Kurds, receiving in return cursings and beatings, Sundays being a chosen day for oppressions. Kurds from a distance also raided the villages (which are named), when the Christians were killed like dogs, their houses burned, and their property carried away, besides which the Government officials had taken by force provisions for themselves, servants, and horses.

In several villages (the names being given) the oppression was also of daily occurrence, the inhabitants having their cattle and other property stolen, and being forced to labour without recompense. In others the people, driven to desperation, fled to the mountains and lived for months in the caves. In a number of villages lying further back in the mountains the people are literally bought and sold by the Kurds as slaves.

In the village of Nahrwan the demands last summer were so excessive that the inhabitants seized one of the Kurds, recovering their goods and taking his guns, but doing him no injury. A few days afterwards this Kurd, with his companions, waylaid two men

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of the village; one was stabbed to death, while the other escaped. The murderers were well known, but were not apprehended, and when, several weeks after the affair, an inquiry was held, the examination was so oppressive to the Christians that they were glad to declare nothing had transpired, even the old mother of the man being so frightened that she said she did not know of any such occurrence, and made no complaints against any one.

The Kurds made several raids upon the village of Kannybalaver, and at their last visit carried off every movable thing, and as the people deserted the village one man (Gegoo by name) was carried several miles and then murdered in cold blood. Other villages are mentioned where there are constant raids, with murders, the flocks of sheep being driven away, in one case numbering several thousand head. A Christian priest of Daree was shot down by Kurds in the presence of two companions, who were so intimidated that they never dared to accuse them.

In the city of Mosul Christians are robbed and killed openly, but the chances of securing justice is so small, and revenge by the Kurds so certain, that they seldom take such cases before the Local Government.

(*a.*) One Christian was stabbed to death on some slight provocation over a game of marbles.

(*b.*) A young man of the Protestant community, and a merchant of high standing, was at his door when a Kurd, without the slightest provocation, stabbed and would have killed him had he not been restrained. No accusation was made, the family knowing that the only result would be more bloodshed.

(*c.*) Two Christians on their way home from selling their sheep in Mosul were pursued by Kurds, one of them being overtaken, shot down, and robbed of a considerable sum of money.

In the district of Zaboor there were a number of Christian villages not many years ago, but now they have all been taken by the Kurds, and the few families left are in practical slavery to them.

A friend who has known the district from Bohtan to Amadia for years says these oppressions are increasing, and unless something is speedily done all the Christian villages will fall into the hands of the Kurds, just as they have in Zaboor.

The following are some among the many abuses heaped upon the Christians of Eastern Turkey by Government officials:—

1. Villages compelled to give Assessors presents to prevent the over-estimating of property. The Assessors secure additional bribes when they signify their willingness to under-estimate. This is used by other officials as an opportunity for levying blackmail.

2. The collectors extort bribes from the people, going to the villages, as a rule, on the Sunday, and frequently interrupt Christian services. The taxes are collected with unnecessary abuse, sometimes with wanton destruction, and without regard to the impoverished condition of the people. Their food supply, household goods, and farming implements were seized in lieu of taxes, their fields and crops mortgaged, the people becoming practically slaves to the Kurds in whose interest this was done.

There are different Assessors and collectors for the various taxes, and when they are in the villages their servants and soldiers, with the horses, must be kept at the expense of the village, and these latter naturally take something for themselves.

In 1892 the Sultan sent a special officer to collect back taxes and convert the Yezidees, who are a remnant of a heathen sect, to Mahommedanism. He was to receive a certain sum for every convert made. As the priests he sent to them did not succeed, he sent his soldiers, who put to the sword all who could not escape and refused to accept Mahommed. Their villages were burned, many were killed in cold blood, some were tortured, while women and young girls were outraged or carried off to harems, and other atrocities too horrible to relate were perpetrated.

The above facts only outline a few of the instances of oppression. It is the daily constant exactions and outrages which are crushing the life out of the Christians.

No. 305.

Colonel Norton to Foreign Office.—(*Received March* 29.)

Sir, *Grosvenor Club, Bond Street, March* 27, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to request you will submit the inclosed paper on certain reforms in Armenia for the consideration of the Right Honourable the Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

I may mention that, with regard to the LXIst Article of the Berlin Treaty, I was the only European officer selected by the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan to organize a Gendarmerie in Kurdish Armenia for the protection of its Christian inhabitants. In carrying out this duty, I was for over a year located in the neighbourhood of the Sassoonian Kremavelie Kurds.

On my return to Constantinople I was directed by Lord Dufferin, then Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, to draw up a Report of the state of affairs in that country, which was accordingly transmitted to Lord Granville with the accompanying explanatory letter, a copy of which is embodied in my present communication:—

"*The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.*—(*Received December* 19.)

"(No. 1096. Confidential.)

"My Lord, "*Constantinople, December* 12, 1881.

"I have the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, an interesting Report which has been drawn up for me by Colonel Norton, of the Gendarmerie, on an armed police for Armenia.

"In spite of many difficulties, and after having encountered considerable hardship, Colonel Norton succeeded in traversing a great portion of Kurdistan, which had hitherto remained inaccessible to Europeans, and even to the Turkish authorities.

"I have reason to believe that while in the country Colonel Norton rendered excellent service to the Government.

"I have, &c.

(Signed) "DUFFERIN."

The full Report is doubtless in the archives of the Foreign Office, which contains a description of the state of affairs then existing in that part of Asia Minor where I was posted, which, I regret to say, have now grown worse instead of improving, as at one time I thought was perfectly possible under an improved administration.

To that Report was also appended a paper on the composition and constitution of a Gendarmerie Corps to be created for special service in Kurdish Armenia. This is a mere matter of detail, and would provide about 5,000 men for duty in an economical manner. I, therefore, only take the liberty of inclosing with this the copy of a Memorandum on reforms which I consider are imperatively necessary before the LXIst Article of the Berlin Treaty can be carried into effect, founded on practical observation and experience.

The whole matter is, in my opinion, a very simple one to manage when once you have suppressed Ottoman bureaucratic interference. I may observe that in a few months I raised a handful of men with which I had little difficulty in keeping order. Repressing Kurdish exactions over tax-paying subjects throughout a large area, and breaking up the gangs of Kiem Dervish Yekchesm who terrorized the country, by killing their leader, were services that these men—themselves Kurds who were used to brigandage—cheerfully rendered for a very small remuneration, principally paid in grain.

I regret that circumstances compel me to trouble you with this written communication, but I take a natural interest in a country to whose welfare I devoted time and trouble. Had my half-brother, Mr. Constantine Phipps, now representing Her Majesty's Government at Rio, been in England, I should have preferred, through him, to have obtained a personal interview with Lord Kimberley, as I might perhaps be able to explain the causes of these alleged massacres in the Sassoon.

I am certainly surprised to hear that more Christians have been put to death there than exist in that thinly-populated country.

I will conclude by stating that the post I held under the Turkish Government was that of Colonel Inspector of the Gendarmerie Brigade for Bitlis, and that I retired with field rank from Her Majesty's army after many years' service.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. G. C. NORTON.

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Inclosure in No. 305.

Memorandum on Reforms for Kurdish Armenia.

1. *Creation of a Province to be called Kurdish Armenia.*

THOSE districts inhabited by Kurds and Christian subjects of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan where the populations are intermixed, such as Van, Hakkiari, Dersim, and Bitlis, and some other portions of provinces, where Kurds and Circassians prevent the tax-paying inhabitants from enjoying the fruits of their labour unmolested, should be formed into one large vilayet under the government of a capable and specially selected functionary, to be called the Viceroy or Governor-General of Kurdish Armenia.

2. *Administrative Councils, or "Medjliss," to have less control, fewer Law Officers required, and a Movable Court of Assize to clear the Gaols.*

The Sub-Governors to be less under the control of the Councils of Administration, such Councils to have fewer members. The law officers to be fewer in number, better paid, and gaol deliveries to be effected by a movable Court of Assize, so as to neutralize local influence.

3. *The Expenses of Local Governments to be secured.*

All revenue (excepting the six indirect contributions) to be paid into the Treasury at the seat of Government selected for Kurdish Armenia, the expenses of Local Governments to be defrayed from this source before payments are made to the Imperial Exchequer.

4. *Special Police Rate.*

A special police rate to be levied from each commune, and taken off the dimes and sheep tax.

5. *Release of Prisoners by Bribery prevented.*

Prisons to be under police authorities, and also all prisoners, and no Inspector of Justice to order the release of a convict until he has completed his sentence.

6. *Delays in executing Capital Sentences, or in enforcing those for Hard Labour through Bribes, prevented.*

Sentences of capital punishment to be carried out without needless delay, and arrangements made to enforce those for hard labour, which at first should be on the roads so necessary for the country.

7. *A Commissioner of Reforms to superintend the execution of Article LXI of the Treaty of Berlin.*

A European Commissioner of Reforms, duly accredited as a Political Agent, to reside at the "chef-lieu" of the Province of Kurdish Armenia. He is to be held responsible that the Gendarmerie force is efficiently kept up, and to keep the European Signatory Powers to the Berlin Treaty constantly informed that the Christian subjects of the Sultan are protected from the aggression of Kurds or Circassians.

8. *Commissioner to be assisted by two Sub-Officials.*

This Commissioner to have the rank and style of Chief Commissioner of Reforms, and be assisted in his duty as Police Inspector by two European officers to be styled Assistant Commissioners of Police and Reforms in Kurdish Armenia.

9. *Division of Kurdish Armenia into Sandjaks or Sub-Governments.*

The entire province to be subdivided into twelve sandjaks, each under its own Mutessarif, and also representing a police district or circle, with its proper proportion of armed police in each.

10. *The entire Province to be kept under Police Surveillance, and twelve European Officers to act as Police Inspectors of Sandjaks.*

A European Inspector of this police force will reside at the Government centre of each sandjak to see that the police are properly paid, the police rate fairly apportioned, and that all His Imperial Majesty's subjects receive protection from robbers and marauders by regular patrols and posts established throughout the country. He is to be held responsible for the efficiency of his force, and see that the officers and men know their duties, and are rationed, foraged, clothed, armed, and disciplined in a suitable manner also that the mounted gendarmes take proper care of their horses.

(Signed) C. G. C. NORTON, *late Colonel Inspector of the Imperial Ottoman Gendarmerie of Bitlis.*

No. 306.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 29.)

(No. 115.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 29, 1895.*

THE French Consul at Diarbekir has telegraphed that since last Tuesday the authorities have exercised great vigilance, and that there have been no acts of violence against Christians.

He also states that the Sheikh of Zeilan has set out from Diarbekir in the direction of Moush.

No. 307.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 134.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 29, 1895.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 148 of the 5th instant, forwarding papers communicated to your Excellency by Mr. Dwight, and Memoranda by Mr. Block and Messrs. Stavrides and Marinitch, in connection with the question of the interference of the Turkish authorities with religious liberty in the Ottoman Empire.

I approve your Excellency's proposal to enter into communication on this subject with the Representatives of the Protestant Powers at Constantinople, and I shall await with interest the result of your deliberations.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 308.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 135.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 30, 1895.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 178 of the 20th instant, reporting the Sultan's wish to effect the expulsion from Constantinople of Mr. Pears, the correspondent of the "Daily News," on the ground of an alleged communication made by him to a French newspaper, and your Excellency's refusal to take cognizance of such a complaint.

I approve the course pursued by your Excellency in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 309.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 137.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 30, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 172 of the 20th instant relative to the restrictions imposed by the Turkish authorities on the movements of foreigners in the Vilayet of Angora.

I approve the terms of the note which your Excellency has addressed to the Porte on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 310.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 31.)

(No. 116.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 31, 1895.

ACCORDING to a telegram received from the French Delegate, there will be sufficient work at Moush for the Commission for a month, and until that time the roads to the Sassoon villages will not be open.